











MODERN PHILOSOPHIES  
*and*  
EDUCATION

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# MODERN PHILOSOPHIES *and* EDUCATION

*The Fifty-fourth Yearbook of the  
National Society for the Study of Education*

## PART I

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*Edited by*  
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## Editor's Preface

The National Society is pleased to present its second publication on educational philosophy. Part I of the Forty-first Yearbook, *Philosophies of Education*, is well and favorably known to the profession. Copies that are available for distribution at the present time represent the thirteenth printing of that yearbook, the cumulative totals of these impressions exceeding twenty-five thousand volumes.

It is not the expectation of the Board of Directors of the Society that the new yearbook, *Modern Philosophies and Education*, will supplant the earlier publication. The relationship between the volumes is clearly supplementary, as will be inferred from the distinctive phrasing of the titles. In the "Introduction" to the present volume, Professor Brubacher, who is chairman of the yearbook committee and was likewise chairman of the committee for the yearbook, *Philosophies of Education*, explains that the present volume will help teachers become acquainted with points of view which were not expounded by the contributors to the earlier yearbook. Moreover, the design of the later yearbook is such that the authors are able to present their own interpretation of the implications of their philosophical concepts for the most important educational problems and practices. Thus, the two yearbooks together afford the student of educational theory and practice a ready access to authoritative opinion on fundamental issues respecting educational aims and procedures as interpreted by educational philosophers on the one hand and, on the other hand, by general philosophers having a particular interest in the progress of education.

Teachers and school administrators will welcome the forthright statements of the authors of the several chapters in this yearbook, both for the scholarly presentations of the tenets of major schools of thought in modern philosophy and for the contribution of these essays to the clarification of the role of philosophy in modern education.

NELSON B. HENRY





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## *Introduction*

CHAIRMAN OF THE YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

In 1942 Part I of the Forty-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education appeared under the title *Philosophies of Education*. In that volume, leading exponents of the currently most prominent philosophies of education contributed chapters expounding their respective points of view. The yearbook was a valuable contribution to the comparative study of educational philosophy because within the covers of a single book it enabled the reader to get a quick survey of the distinctive thought of each philosophic system stated by an advocate of that system.

In order to augment even further the philosophical resources available for the guidance of those engaged in education, the National Society is here projecting a second yearbook in educational philosophy. In this yearbook it seeks to acquaint teachers not only with more points of view but also with new authors. While the Forty-first Yearbook invited leading philosophers of education to contribute to its pages, the present yearbook has invited men from general philosophy. In the field of general philosophy there are not only more varieties of opinion than in the more limited field of education, but there are also a number of prominent philosophers whose views on education, if once worked out from their author's philosophical premises, may very well provide fresh insights into educational problems. While professional education undoubtedly stands to benefit from the consideration given its problems by general philosophy, we may well hope at the same time that general philosophers will find their problems somewhat clearer by virtue of having thought them through in terms of their educational implications.

In projecting this yearbook, the Board of Directors of the Society has realized from the start that general philosophers, although usually acquainted with education as professors in colleges and universities, might not be equally familiar with the problems of education at

lower levels, as secondary and elementary. In order, therefore, to make their philosophical analysis and conclusions as available as possible on these lower rungs of the educational ladder, an educational collaborator was appointed for each contributor to this yearbook. In each case the yearbook committee chose someone from the field of educational philosophy whose system of thought was as nearly sympathetic to that of the contributor as possible. The plan of the yearbook committee has been that each contributor should write his chapter and then submit it to his collaborator for criticism. For the most part, collaborators' criticisms have been incorporated into the main body of contributors' chapters. In some cases, however, criticism as further comment by collaborators has been included in footnotes or quotations.

In order to facilitate the reader's comparison of the various philosophies presented, the yearbook has been organized according to a definite design. It is a shortcoming of the Forty-first Yearbook that the contributors there did not address themselves to any common set of problems. Consequently, although notable differences occur between chapters, it is not always easy to compare them at specific points. The present volume has sought to avoid this difficulty in two ways. In the first place, the chairman of the yearbook committee wrote an introductory chapter in which he tried to shape up some of the principal philosophical issues underlying education in mid-twentieth century. This chapter was distributed to contributors and collaborators prior to an early face-to-face meeting of the whole group. Later at this meeting this chapter was further sharpened by common agreement to direct attention to six vital areas. As a result, each author agreed as nearly as possible to write (1) an opening section in which he would develop his general philosophical orientation; then would follow five sections, each developing some educational aspect of the author's main philosophical position, as (2) a section developing aims, values, and curriculum, (3) another developing the educative process, its methods, motivation, and the like, (4) the next dealing with school and society, (5) the following one considering the school and the individual, and (6) the final section dealing with religious and moral education.

The order in which the chapters in the yearbook appear perhaps needs explaining. Instead of following some pattern based on the

relation of schools of philosophical thought to each other it has seemed best to group at the beginning those chapters which most nearly follow the divisions outlined in the preceding paragraph. This will facilitate the reading of the yearbook by those less accustomed to digging into philosophical writing. After having read these chapters, they will be more prepared for those in which authors addressed themselves to the suggested problems but found some other pattern of organization and treatment more convenient for bringing out their principal points with maximum effect.

## CHAPTER I

### *The Challenge To Philosophize about Education*

JOHN S. BRUBACHER

#### *Educational Theory in Relation to Social Tensions*

The study of educational philosophy has flourished in the twentieth century as never before in the whole history of education. Earlier centuries, no doubt, produced a fair share of famous essays on education, but relatively few of these essays were philosophical in exposition and intent. Comenius' *Didactica Magna*, Locke's *Thoughts Concerning Education*, and Rousseau's *Émile* were notable publications, but none of the three was explicitly a philosophy of education. Perhaps a philosophy of education was implicit in these essays, but certainly none was systematically set forth. Philosophers like Aristotle, St. Thomas, Kant, and Hegel gave passing attention to education, but in no case did one of them give it rounded treatment. Herbart took education much more seriously, but even he limited himself to its moral and psychological aspects. Only Plato of pre-twentieth-century philosophers produced a notable philosophy of education (in his *Republic*). The twentieth century, by contrast, has produced almost a plethora of publications on philosophy of education, mostly American. Indeed, only half over, it has already produced not only one major philosophy of education, Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, but a dozen or more minor ones as well.<sup>1</sup>

What is the reason for this greatly augmented interest in educational philosophy? Perhaps the simplest answer is the rise of "progressive education" as a *cause célèbre*. At first, the newer educational procedures of this movement were a protest against the rather

1. For a bibliography of these writings, see John S. Brubacher's *Modern Philosophies of Education*, pp. 299n, 303n, 314n, 317n, 320n. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1950 (revised edition).

formal educational practices inherited from the nineteenth century. As the protest gained momentum, people began to see that the newer educational practices were not just an amendment to traditional practice but involved a fundamental departure from it. In the early phases of the movement, "progressive education" met no more opposition than the inertia of convention. While the progressive concepts had difficulty in overcoming this inertia in practice, the advocates of reform won easy victories over such opposition in the field of theory during the 1920's. As theoretical victories led to more and more victories in the field of practice, the defenders of traditional and conventional education finally took pen in hand to defend their own practices and even to go over to the offensive to attack progressive education during the 1930's. Then war intervened, causing an interlude in the strife of educational systems, and our whole energies were mobilized to resolve the international strife of political and economic ideologies. Now that there is an interlude after that war, we have returned to the conflict of educational ideologies again.

It is no doubt an oversimplification to ascribe the great interest of the twentieth century in educational philosophy to just the contest between progressive and traditional educational practices. The issue really lies much deeper. The experimental schools which made up progressive education were but the vanguard of that larger twentieth-century endeavor to assume more and more intentional control of the social process. Traditional methods of cultural transmission and renewal, once left to automatic processes, now became the object of conscious consideration. Progressive schools, for instance, deliberately fashioned their practices on scientific findings. As these often were in conflict with cherished traditional convictions there was an urgent demand for a fresh philosophical approach to resolve the conflict.

Thus, while traditional education has been based on a metaphysical psychology, "progressive education" has taken its cue from a psychology recently become scientific. Techniques of measurement devised by the new psychology have demanded a different conception of human nature, a conception which traditional education has often found repugnant to its metaphysical psychology. Again, the interpretation of biological findings, especially the theory

of organic evolution, has widened the differences between traditional and "progressive" education. To attach the adjective "progressive" to education can mean quite different things depending on whether one uses an Aristotelian or a Darwinian conception of development. Further educational complications have arisen from a third scientific area, anthropological and sociological studies. The cultural relativity frequently espoused by these disciplines has stood in sharp contrast to fixed conceptions of the curriculum, especially in moral education, held by adherents of the old school. Underlying all these issues are conflicting assumptions which only careful and systematic philosophizing can clarify.

It must be remembered, too, that these disagreements over educational policy took place in the twentieth century in a matrix of political and economic upheaval. This century has witnessed a rising struggle for political power between varieties of autocracy—monarchic at first, fascistic later, and communistic currently—and varieties of democracy—laissez-faire individualism, benevolent paternal new-dealism, and a pragmatic liberalism strongly supported by many professional leaders of teachers. The resulting confusion over political ideals obviously has obscured the precise nature of citizenship as a dominating aim of education. The strife of political systems has been underscored by the further strife of economic systems, notably capitalism and communism. If, as some philosophers allege, the quality of education varies according to the way in which a man earns his bread, then the road ahead for education is anything but clear, for the rise of the working classes the world over is already making unprecedented demands for the reform of education.

The strife of political and economic ideologies has also greatly aggravated nationalistic rivalries. To the rational arguments which can be adduced for each ideology has been added the organized forces of national states. Consequently, national schools have taught these ideologies with patriotic fervor. The threat this provides to amicable settlement of international disagreements brings nearer the resulting danger of war. Just how to harness national resources to provide added educational opportunities and yet how at the same time to avoid irreconcilable rivalries is obviously another problem driving educators to philosophy. Their problem takes on com-



plication as well as inspiration as they seek an educational policy to undergird the efforts of UNESCO, a policy which will respect diverse national, political, economic, and religious factors in education and yet will find a common denominator for them all.

Naturally, conflicts such as these have placed tremendous strain on the moral texture of twentieth-century culture. To teach children how to maintain moral integrity and integrated personalities in the face of all these conflicting demands is no simple task. The main trouble is that it is so difficult to tell in a period of accelerated social transition whether new departures in well-accepted customs are a weakening of former standards or a step toward new and better ones. It is even difficult to tell whether the ills which beset us presently are the result of changing social conditions or the changes brought about in the schools by "progressive education." On the assumption that it is the secularism of "progressive education" that is to blame, some in the twentieth century have demanded a renewed emphasis on religion in public education. This demand, of course, requires a re-examination of the nineteenth-century policy of the divorce of church and state in matters of education, to say nothing of rethinking the whole problem of religious and moral education in the light of the foregoing forces.

In view of the contradictory, often confusing, issues presented, it should not be surprising that men have resorted to philosophizing about education in this century as never before. This does not mean that it is anything new for men to be in a quandary about which direction education should take. Men have confronted many such crises in civilization's long history. Plato, for instance, wrote his *Republic* partly in response to the unstable social conditions of his day. Still, the present tensions seem more acute for education than previous ones. The principal difference between present and past eras seems to be that today education is consciously used as a tremendous instrument of public policy. Formerly, only the privileged classes benefited by an extended education. But today most states aim at universal education, the education of all classes. Consequently, alterations in educational direction caused by shifting configurations of tension among the forces mentioned above have a far greater outreach than ever before in the world's history.

*Progressive versus Traditional Aims in Education*

While aggravated tensions—political, economic, religious, scientific—are probably at the bottom of the proliferation of educational philosophies in the twentieth century, it should not escape notice that one philosophical endeavor to resolve these tensions is itself also a major cause of this proliferation. Except for the emergence of John Dewey and the persistent challenge of his pragmatism to every phase of contemporary education, it is unlikely that educational philosophy would have had anywhere near the rise to prominence it has had in this century. His writings were not only the inspiration for others who wrote in the same vein but, much more important for richness and breadth in professional literature, he provoked opponents of his view to make explicit a variety of philosophical defenses of traditional or conservative educational practices which had only been implicit thitherto. This was particularly true of the Catholic position.

Since Dewey's pragmatism has been the principal philosophical proponent of "progressive education" and since the launching of "progressive education" was the immediate, if not ultimate, cause of so much writing in educational philosophy, it may be well, before sharpening and stating the issues to which the contributors of this yearbook will address themselves, to give some exposition of the nature of the attack that Dewey and pragmatism have made on conventional educational practices. Perhaps before doing that, however, we should take a look at the theory and practice of the sort of education which Dewey sought to reform when he inaugurated his experimental school at the University of Chicago.

Perhaps the briefest and at the same time the most accurate description of the conventional school of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is to be found in the Lynds' *Middletown*.<sup>2</sup> "The school like the factory," ran their sociological description of Middletown, "is a thoroughly regimented world. Immovable seats in orderly rows fix the sphere of activity of each child. For all, from the timid six-year-old entering for the first time to the most assured high-school senior, the general routine is much the same. Bells divide the day into periods. For the six-year-olds the periods are short

2. R. S. Lynd and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown*, pp. 188-89. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929.

(fifteen to twenty-five minutes) and varied; in some they leave their seats, play games, and act out make-believe stories, although in 'recitation periods' all movement is prohibited. As they grow older the taboo upon physical activity becomes stricter, until by the third or fourth year practically all movement is forbidden except the marching from one set of seats to another between periods, a brief interval of prescribed exercise daily, and periods of manual training or home economics once or twice a week. There are 'study periods' in which children learn 'lessons' from 'textbooks' prescribed by the state and 'recitation periods' in which they tell an adult teacher what the book has said; one hears children reciting the battles of the Civil War in one recitation period, the rivers of Africa in another, the 'parts of speech' in a third; the method is much the same."

No one in the nineteenth century explicitly expounded the philosophy behind this practice. Yet an educational philosophy it surely had. The spirit of this school fairly breathes rigidity, formalism, and regimentation. These qualities may have been due to the shortcomings of unselected and poorly trained teachers of which there is an oversupply at any time. But over and above that, there were many educators, lay and professional people, who justified this formalism because it afforded a valuable discipline for children. By subduing their natural spontaneity and subjugating it to a fixed routine, to screwed-down seats and desks, to a logically organized subject matter, children learned to conform to the way things are. And things did exist in a definite order and fashion. This was particularly true in the moral order and the scientific order of nature. In this order, human nature was composed of faculties, and it was the role of the school to sharpen them by grinding them against the abrasive whetstone of the hard facts of life. If that seemed disagreeable, Mr. Dooley was at hand to humor critics by stating ironically that it did not really matter what children studied so long as they didn't like it. Consequently, interest was neglected and children were urged to put forth effort in the sheer performance of abstract duty. The teacher's authority, even for those so fortunate as to be trained along Herbartian lines, was omnipresent to enforce this duty.

At a little deeper level most thoughtful nineteenth-century edu-

cators, and many twentieth-century educators as well, whether Catholic or Protestant, subscribed to a humanistic theory of education. They held with Aristotle that the distinctive nature of man which set him off from other animals was his rationality. The principal function of education, therefore, was to develop this rationality. This was to be sought as a worth-while end in itself for, as Aristotle said, "The activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative; and of human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness. . . . Happiness extends, then, just as far as contemplation does, and those to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy, not as a mere concomitant but in virtue of the contemplation; for this is itself precious."<sup>3</sup> Or, as Cardinal Newman put it centuries later with educational bearings more definitely in mind, "Surely it is very intelligible to say, and that is what I say here, that Liberal Education, viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence."<sup>4</sup>

The experimental schools of the twentieth century, of which Dewey's was merely one of the earlier and better known, made a definite departure from the type of education compositely described in *Middletown*. In these new schools the last thing school resembled was a factory. Instead of mechanical uniformity, school was characterized by flexibility and spontaneity. School furniture was movable and the length of periods was measured by the work in hand to be done. Pupil activity, far from being taboo, became the central feature of the progressive school. Indeed, its curriculum became known as an "activity" curriculum. Children still dug subject matter out of texts but not isolated from life and for the mere formal purpose of reproducing it on examinations. On the contrary, they undertook projects in which they were interested and searched subject matter for suggestions for activities to be undertaken to insure the successful outcome of their projects.

Obviously, the spirit or philosophy of this school stood in marked contrast to that of *Middletown*. The features of this spirit which im-

3. Aristotle, *Politics*, Bk. X, chap. viii.

4. J. H. Newman, *The Idea of a University*, p. 121. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919.

pressed observers most were its emphasis on pupil interest and pupil freedom in a school atmosphere where the teacher was less a task-master and more a friendly guide. Children were free to select tasks they were interested in and free to move about in search of resources from the library, laboratory, field, and shop which might promote the completion of what they had undertaken. Naturally, such a school had need to be rich in resources so that no side of child development would be neglected. If such a regime developed individuality, initiative, self-reliance, and a moral autonomy in its pupils, it was but the normal expectation.

Parenthetically, it might be mentioned that this far even conservative and traditional educators had generally moved by the middle of the twentieth century. By that time, indeed, they had so absorbed many progressive practices that the Progressive Education Association had spent much of its driving protest force from the 1920's. Yet, while copying many progressive practices, conservatives and traditionalists still refused to support them theoretically with Dewey's pragmatism.

At a still more penetrating level, progressive educators themselves split on the theoretical underpinning of their practices. One group followed the lead of Rousseau and Froebel. They took the romantic view of natural development. Reverencing the essential goodness of child nature, they held it their duty as parents and educators to let nature express itself freely and to interfere with its laws as little as possible. Because they revered the unique in child nature as well as the universal, they insisted on giving a high priority to the individual interests of the child in organizing the school program. Romantic progressives derived further support for their theory from G. Stanley Hall and Sigmund Freud. Hall's theory, that the child must "recapitulate" racial experience just as his foetal development recapitulated organic evolution, led to the further theory of catharsis. According to this theory, if the child acts like a little savage when passing through and recapitulating the aboriginal stage of culture, adults must let him behave that way to get it out of his system. Even more recently the romantic progressives have leaned mistakenly on Freudian psychoanalysis to support their theory of freedom for child nature. From seeing the warped personalities which result from abnormal repression of natural drives,

they have justified a system of education which encouraged uninhibited expression of native impulses.

The romantic wing of progressive education has attracted so much public attention, mostly unfavorable, that it has almost eclipsed the more sober and stable wing which drew its support largely from the leadership of John Dewey. Dewey, too, favored the activity program with its attendant pupil interest and freedom. But instead of grounding this program in a theory of child nature, he grounded it in his pragmatic theory of knowledge. Knowledge, he claimed, is the outcome of action. Confronted with a problem, an adult or child constructs in imagination a theory or hypothesis of how it might be solved. The truth or falsity of the proposed solution develops from whether or not the consequences of acting on the hypothesis corroborate it. Under such a regime freedom and interest are necessary conditions for selecting appropriate ends and means in solving the child's project. The progressive in contrast to the traditional school, then, according to Dewey, allows the child freedom to engage in interesting activities, not just because the child's active nature demands it (although that is important) but also because only by initiating activities and noting their consequences is an investigator or learner warranted in asserting when knowledge is true.

In Dewey's conception of the progressive school, the role of intelligence is clearly instrumental. Taking his cue from Darwinian evolution, he regards human intelligence as a relatively latecomer on the world scene. Consequently, the school cultivates intelligence as a tool to solve problems. This is very different from Aristotle and Newman, who would have education cultivate intelligence as an end in itself. For Dewey, taking his cue further from Darwinian evolution, there are no final educational ends in and of themselves. The ends of education are always subject to further reconstruction in the light of an uncertain and contingent future.

Not everyone has the talent, or what is more necessary, the economic leisure to join that stratum of society known as the intelligentsia which cultivates intelligence as an end in itself. Yet everyone can employ intelligence in the management of his daily affairs. In the one case, the cultivation of intelligence leads to the education of the few; and in the other, to the education of the many. Con-

sequently, progressives claimed their educational philosophy to be more democratic than that of the traditionalists. Both philosophies, of course, supported the idea of education for all, but they differed on the quality of the education to be so given. Thus, progressives further claimed that their more pupil-centered practices were more democratic than the teacher-centered practices of the traditional school.

With the coming of the great economic depression of the 1930's, the romantic individualists in the "progressive-education" movement were severely taken to task for lack of a social orientation. Spurred on by the vital sense of direction fascist and communist education seemed to possess, many progressives turned social-planners and championed the notion that the school should take the initiative in bringing about a new social order cured of the defects of the present. The idea that progressive education should take a position in the van of social progress seemed entirely logical to many of its supporters. As a matter of fact, however, the left-wing group who captured "progressive education" for this cause received as much, if not more, unfavorable notice from the conservatively minded public as had the romantic individualists of the preceding decade. The traditional school considered itself the creature of the existing social order, not the creator of a new one!

Those who thought that the school should take a position of leadership in reconstructing the social order were in constant need of the protection of academic freedom. When the ship of state rocked violently to and fro during the depression, conservatives were afraid that progressive educators might rock it just the bit further which would cause it to founder. Loyalty oaths, designed at this time to lessen the lurch by screening out "radical" teachers, became much more formidable threats to schools after the war when the world settled down to the prolonged cold war between the communist East and the democratic West.

### *Contemporary Issues in American Education*

We have been at some pains to recount briefly the principal points of the controversy between traditional and "progressive education"—all against the twentieth-century background of world political, economic, religious, and scientific tensions—not only to account for

the great interest of this century in educational philosophy but also to point up the main issues in contemporary education to which the contributors of this yearbook will address themselves. It is mainly because these issues remain unresolved as we return to them again after the war and because we need fresh insight into their solution in the second half of the century that we ~~invite a group of~~ academic philosophers to bring their talents to bear on them in this yearbook.

Now to summarize and restate the issues. Unfortunately, to state them in the detail they deserve is out of the question in a volume of this size. In the short space at the disposal of each contributor, it will only be possible to indicate the main issues.

1. *There is a current anxiety that modern education is adrift without rudder, chart, or compass.* Is there a frame of reference by which we can defendably orient ourselves and thus regain a sense of direction? It is all well and good to flatter ourselves that in the twentieth century we are substituting conscious and deliberate transmission and renewal of the culture for the automatic selection of the folkways. Yet we could easily deceive ourselves without a reliable point of reference. For instance, shall we take a monistic or pluralistic view of the culture we seek to screen and renew? Can we detect any enduring structures in culture, or is culture quite relativistic? By what standard of truth shall we judge our culture? Shall we teach young people that there is just one standard or that there are several standards: religious, metaphysical, and scientific?

2. *There is a current anxiety that, of the educational aims we have, too many are vague or conflicting and too few generate strong loyalty.* By what standard can we validate our aims and values? By the ordinances of some deity? By aptness to human nature? By some subrational measure like "blood and soil"? By fitness to some particular time and place? Of course learning involves the continual reconstruction of experience but should that include a constant reconstruction of the aims of education as well? Or are there some aims of education which are not merely proximate ends but ultimate and perennial? Without answers to questions such as these, how can we tell which studies in the curriculum are the solid ones and which the fads and frills? Are social studies, such as the college-preparatory ones, inherently and intrinsically valuable while others, like vocational ones, are only instrumentally valuable?



3. *There is a current anxiety that there has been a serious letdown in standards of instruction as a result of modern educational procedures.* In part, this anxiety grows out of an apprehension that too much attention is paid to the motivation of studies. All agree that no learning takes place without some motivation or interest. But should we go so far as to say that subjects in the curriculum derive their value from being liked by children, or do subjects on occasion have values independently of being liked so that children can be told they ought to learn them even though they are not interested in them? Must standards necessarily fall unless we take this latter position? Is it good discipline to study what you do not like? Does such study result in greater force of moral character?

In part, the above anxiety grows out of the authority of instruction. How shall we regard the deposit of truth in the curriculum? Does the truth antedate instruction or is it the outcome of activities undertaken in the classroom, in school shops or laboratories, or on field trips? Is the problem-solving method, predicated on the scientific method, the best way of teaching and learning the truth? Would a student meet higher standards if his instruction depended on other methods as well, e.g., intuition, pure reasoning, or the acceptance of authority?

4. *There is a current anxiety that we are unsure of our democratic conception of education and that we have only fainthearted faith in it anyhow.* Just what does democratic regard for the individual mean? Does it mean a laissez-faire, almost romantic freedom for each student to design his own house of knowledge? Does it mean a benevolent paternalism wherein the school authorities determine what is best for children and then see that they get it? Or does it involve a situation in which children, together with adults and other children, learn to share decisions and their consequences even though this may mean testing out many things for themselves and sometimes reaching conclusions at variance with tradition? If the latter, should we expect the school to include controversial social issues in its curriculum? In that event, should the school take a neutral stand between the contending views, slant the outcome of instruction toward accepted democratic values, or encourage children to think in terms of a progressive reconstruction of the social order? This

raises a question of the extent of our commitment to academic freedom as a preparation for the civil liberties of American life.

5. *There is a current anxiety that the social framework of the school accords the child too much freedom and does not subordinate him sufficiently to authority and control.* This statement stirs the inquiry whether parents and teachers yield children too much initiative and are too prone to assign priority to children's interests. Would it be better if children's interests were more frequently subordinated to those of adults, if adults would exert more control over children again? If more external control is restored in education, how at the same time shall we build initiative, self-reliance, and moral autonomy in children? And if the authority of the adult regains some of its former importance, how at the same time shall we preserve education from becoming authoritarian and undemocratic?

6. *There is a current anxiety that the public schools, overanxious to avoid sectarianism, are neglecting religion and becoming too secular.* Is there a religious dimension to education which is being neglected? Would more attention to such a dimension give current education a much-needed stability and sense of direction? Will more attention to religion in the public school confuse the proper spheres of God and Caesar? Should we re-examine the nineteenth-century tradition of the divorce of church and state in the field of public education?

### *The Role of Philosophy in Educational Progress*

No doubt, as already stated, more issues could be listed. No doubt, too, the issues listed could have been drawn up under different categories. In terms of where we are in the middle of the twentieth century, however, the foregoing seem to be the areas in which the major contemporary issues lie. The issues have been stated largely in educational rather than bald philosophical terms. But the underlying philosophical issues are not far to seek. The usual problems of philosophy lie just beneath the surface of these educational terms. The nature of knowledge, of value, of man, of society, and of the world must each be met before a satisfactory conclusion can be formed of what to do next in our present predicament.

## CHAPTER II

### *Education and Human Society: A Realistic View\**

JOHN WILD

The aim of this paper is to present a view of the nature of education which has emerged from the age-long discussions of realistic philosophers. In addition, we shall try to show as clearly as possible how this philosophic position implies certain definite answers to the important questions with which we are dealing in this volume. Limitations of space will often prevent thorough discussion of controversial matters. But we shall try to give a clear and coherent outline of the realistic view and to refer at least briefly to the evidence on which it is based.

#### *Basic Orientation*

##### WHAT IS REALISTIC PHILOSOPHY?

Realistic philosophy is best defined in terms of three basic theses—metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical—to which it is definitely committed.

*The Metaphysical Thesis.* The universe is made up of real, substantial entities, existing in themselves and ordered to one another by extramental relations. These entities and relations really exist whether they are known or not. To be is not the same as to be known. We ourselves and the other entities around us actually exist, independent of our opinions and desires. This may be called the thesis of independence.

*The Epistemological Thesis.* These real entities and relations can be known in part by the human mind as they are in themselves. Experience shows us that all cognition is intentional or relational in character. Every concept is *of* something; every judgment *about*

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something. The realist holds that this is a peculiar relation by which the knowing act becomes united with, in a nonmaterial sense, or directly identified with something really existent. The mind does not become physically one with its object. To know an explosion is not to explode. Nevertheless, cognition is not merely a matter of containing states within one's self. To have gray cells inside the cortex is not to know this fact. To know something is to become *relationally* identified with an existent entity as it is. This is the thesis of direct realism.

*The Ethical Thesis.* Such knowledge, especially that which treats of human nature, can provide us with immutable and trustworthy principles for the guidance of individual and social action. All men share certain common traits which determine vague tendencies in every child. These tendencies must be realized together in an orderly way if human life is to be really fulfilled. In subhuman entities such tendencies are determinate, inflexible, and realized automatically with the sole support of external natural agencies. In man this is not the case. He has not been endowed with an exhaustive array of inflexible instincts which automatically propel him to the proper acts. Instead, he has been given very flexible tendencies together with the power of cognition by which he may rationally understand his essential needs and freely determine his conduct in accordance therewith. The invariable, universal pattern of action, individual as well as social, required for the completion of human nature is called *the moral law or natural law*. By self-observation every individual has some minimal knowledge of it. By disciplined study of human nature and the events of history, this knowledge may be increased and clarified. Such knowledge is the only trustworthy guide for human action.

These realistic theses<sup>1</sup> are at least dimly recognized by the original philosophic insight, or common sense as we call it, of mankind. While we are acting, we all know that we are surrounded by independent forces that help or hinder us. We recognize genuine knowledge in the realistic sense as an actual fact—or else we should not consult a doctor when we are ill. This knowledge also yields us some understanding of the law of nature and its inexorable sanc-

1. For a fuller discussion of these theses, cf. *The Return to Reason*, pp. 357-63. Edited by John Wild. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953.

tions. Is there anyone who does not know that babies should be fed, for otherwise they cannot live; and that children ought to be educated, for otherwise they lapse into ignorance and social life becomes impossible? Our common sense is notoriously and incurably realistic; and the proper function of philosophy is to extend and to clarify this basic philosophic knowledge, to make it more exact, and to protect it from distortion and confusion.

As a matter of fact, this has happened in every highly developed civilization where philosophy has been pursued in a disciplined manner for a long period of time—from the Far East and Middle East to the West. The neo-Confucian tradition in China is predominantly realistic. The world exists independently of its being known. But the human mind can know it as it really is, and a universal moral law is clearly recognized. Two early schools of Hindu thought were basically realistic, though later submerged in the idealistic currents of Vedanta philosophy. But even here we find such a realistic conception as that of the natural right to life deeply ingrained in the Hindu mind.<sup>2</sup> The best Mohammedan thought stemming from the great Aristotelian commentators Averroes and Avicenna is predominantly realistic, though in this and other traditions the concept of natural law has been confused with many accidental accretions coming from religious sources.

The vague, primordial realism of common sense is as widespread as man himself. But a more exact realism, as a special pursuit of disciplined thought, is found in all the highly developed civilizations. Up to the present time, however, this mode of philosophical reflection has been most intensively pursued and has achieved its most profound and articulate expressions in our own Western culture.<sup>3</sup> Inaugurated by Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece, it was intensively pursued in the Middle Ages by St. Augustine, Aquinas, and their followers. Entering into a period of decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was eclipsed by Cartesian idealism which soon became the dominant philosophy of modern times. Nevertheless, it was still cultivated and intensively pursued with

2. Cf. P. T. Raju, *India's Culture and Her Problems*, pp. 76-77. Jaipur, India: University of Rajputana Press, 1952.

3. For an account of realism in the West, cf. John Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy*, chap. i. New York: Harper & Bros., 1948.

fruitful results by such first-rate minds as Thomas Reid, Maine de Biran, Trendelenburg, Brentano, and many others. Now, with the decline of subjectivism and idealism, it is receiving widespread attention once more.

#### REALISM AND OTHER TYPES OF PHILOSOPHY

Realism is strongly indicated by the common insight of mankind. Unless our human faculties are basically distorted and unreliable, it is the way of truth. But the common sense of men is vague and hazy. It is easily confused and led into oversimplification and error. If we really lived according to these errors, we would soon be brought to disaster and misery. But we may accept and elaborate them intellectually without any immediate effect on our lives. When artificially cultivated in this way, they have a strange fascination for many minds.

They usually consist of oversimplified versions of the truth. Everything is reduced to mind, as in idealism, or to physical stuff, as in materialism. This gives the illusion of far-reaching insight with little strain on the mind or the imagination. From these theories we may derive conclusions strikingly different from those that rule our actual lives. This gives the impression of novelty and originality. Hence, from the time of the ancient Greeks, many of these oversimplified accounts of the world have been current in our culture. Many of them are still current at this present period of instability and transition.

Idealism is now on the wane but is still exerting an important influence on many different modes of thought. It is sharply distinct from realism as we have defined it. The Kantian idealist would accept the first thesis of independence. He holds that there is a noumenal, unknowable reality which exists independently of us. But he rejects the other two theses. Knowledge is viewed as a constructive process rather than as an act of assimilation or apprehension. Hence, the human mind can never know things in themselves as they really are, but only as they are warped by the cognitive process. The Kantian philosopher accepts a universal moral law. This seems like moral realism. But it is not, for this moral law is not discovered in the very nature of things but is rather laid down autonomously by the mind of man without any empirical ground.

The Hegelian idealists not only reject the second and third theses but the first as well. There is no purely physical existence at all. The whole world is conceived as a vast spiritual or mental process in which pure thought develops into ever richer, higher, and freer forms. Being is not distinguished from being known.

Existentialism is a violent reaction against this sort of idealism. It holds that existence, or being, is radically different from being known. The former is subjective and in itself; the latter objective and relational. Rational thought is universal and abstract. Existence is individual and concrete. In this and in many other respects, existentialism is a return to realism. But it has gone so far in separating existence from thought that it has fallen into a type of irrationalism which denies that anything may be truly known at all as an object of reason.<sup>4</sup> This disparagement of universal concepts and judgments on which exact communication depends and the moral individualism or subjectivism to which it leads mark off this mode of thought from any type of realism.

Positivism is an even more extreme reaction against the idealistic theory of mind as the creator of reality and the weird and unverifiable speculations to which this view has led such thinkers as Schelling and Hegel. The positivists rightly claim that unless a theory can be directly verified by or logically deduced from empirical data it is worthless. According to them, all such data belong to the province of some science. There is no philosophic evidence by which basic theories can be checked. Hence, they are dismissed as unimportant and even as meaningless.

The realist believes that, in addition to the measurable data of the sciences, there are vast ranges of nonquantitative data, such as existence, knowledge, and change, which are too pervasive to fall within the isolated province of any special science. While this evidence is not subject to the quantitative methods of science, it can, nevertheless, be described and analyzed. For example, the mental process of deliberation and choice, as it occurs in the concrete, includes nonquantitative factors which cannot be weighed and measured. We cannot spread a choice out on a microscopic slide. However, we can study it and describe its essential features as they actual-

4. Cf. James Collins, *The Existentialists*, pp. 189-96. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1952.

ly occur.<sup>5</sup> This attempt to describe the qualitative structure of empirical fact is now called phenomenology.<sup>6</sup> The realist claims that such an analysis, if carried out in a disciplined way, will show that the three basic theses of realism and other related theories are actually in agreement with the empirical facts. The positivist sharply disagrees. He claims that these theories either fall within the province of some definite science, like psychology, or that they attempt to answer meaningless questions which never should be raised.

At the present time, materialism, or that vague form of materialism known as *naturalism*, is extremely influential in the Western world. Just as the idealist claims that all being is mind or a state of mind, so materialism claims that all being is quantitative and material. (According to realism, *being* is wider in scope and cannot be reduced to either.) Man is no exception. He is regarded merely as a highly complex physical organism acting according to the same kind of law that holds of nature generally. Human awareness is conceived as an intricate response of the central nervous system which, if consistently developed, leads to subjectivism, for such responses are necessarily contained within the organism. There is little place for human freedom, since physical processes are determined by physical antecedents. Any notion of a Divine Being higher than man has to be rejected. The whole world of nature is held to be self-sustaining. Value is interpreted as the satisfaction of psychophysical propensities or interests. In the West this view has led to a utilitarian relativism in moral theory. Each individual and each culture has its own particular pattern of interests. What is good for one is bad for another. The only remedy for this chaos is a uniform process of conditioning under the direction of scientific experts.<sup>7</sup>

Of all the many varieties of naturalism, the dialectical materialism of the East is now by far the most profound and thoroughly developed. It differs in certain respects from Western naturalism. Matter is conceived in a less passive way. It moves itself spontaneously by dialectical laws that first bring it into opposition with itself

5. Aristotle has given such a description of choice in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. III, chaps. ii and iii.

6. Cf. *The Return to Reason*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-55.

7. Cf. B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1948.



and then lead on to higher syntheses. Human history is the highest stage of this cosmic process. It must culminate eventually in the triumph of the working class and the communist society. This idea of moral values as grounded on cosmic laws mitigates the relativism which has characterized materialistic ethical theory elsewhere and helps to elicit that moral conviction and fervor which is an important factor in the spread of communism.

All forms of materialism would accept the first thesis of realism, that of independence. The world exists in itself, apart from our desires and knowledge. Most materialists would wish to accept the second thesis, that this existence can be known as it really is. But here, they are embarrassed by their restricted physicalist categories which prevent them from clearly recognizing the peculiar relation of intentional identity. No physical entity is physically identical with another such entity. This is a downright contradiction. Every physical influence is individuated and subjectivized by the physical entity receiving it. Hence, no materialistic theory of knowledge has yet been formulated which escapes the absurdities of subjectivism. So, in spite of what he may wish, there is a grave question as to whether a materialist can consistently accept the second thesis.

The sharpest issue concerns the third thesis on natural law and the view of man that this implies. The realist holds that the human intellect and will cannot be adequately understood in terms of purely physicalist categories. The materialist denies this. According to realism, all men share certain essential tendencies which require that certain moral principles be obeyed by all men if they are to live authentic human lives. Materialists are skeptical of all such moral generalizations. The realist believes that men are free within limits to act as they choose in the light of what they understand. Thus, they may violate the moral law if they so decide. The materialist, on the other hand, is a determinist. Men may be called free if their acts are externally unimpeded. But freedom of choice is a delusion. Human thoughts and acts are uniquely determined by laws over which we have no control.

In addition to these moral differences, there is also a basic cosmological issue. In the light of the empirical evidence available to us the realist holds that we ourselves and all other things of which we have any direct evidence are dependent and contingent. None of

these beings necessarily exists. A world made up of such dependent entities cannot be self-sufficient but requires a nondependent, extrinsic source. As we have seen, the materialist denies any reason for supposing such a source. This, of course, leads to divergent attitudes toward religion.

This must suffice for a brief account of the general nature of realistic philosophy and its differences from other modes of thought. We must now turn to the realistic view of human education.

### *Educational Aims and Values*

From the time of Plato, realists have held that education is an essential feature of our life and that it cannot be understood without examining human society and grasping clearly those peculiar traits that distinguish it from animal communities.

#### HUMAN VERSUS ANIMAL SOCIETY

Such an animal community as a hive of bees is made up of many individuals acting together in co-operative ways. These acts are performed with a minimum degree of flexibility, being adjusted to changing circumstance by sensory awareness. Thus, the bee is directed to a particular flower by sight and smell. But the general pattern of social activity is automatically determined by inherited instincts common to the species. If these inherited modes of response fail to adjust the group to its environment, this group will be eliminated and replaced by others with better hereditary equipment. These responses proceed inflexibly and without any rational control.

The human community is also made up of many individuals acting together in co-operative ways for the benefit of all. The analogy with animal groups is so striking as to have been noted. It has even exerted an important influence on certain types of social theory. It is equally important, however, to note the basic differences. These are primarily two. In the first place, the human infant has not been endowed with a fixed set of instincts that automatically direct him to the required activities. He remains flexible and indeterminate throughout the prolonged period of childhood. If this indeterminate condition were not overcome in some way, he would be the most helpless of the animals. What, then, takes the place of instinct?

This brings us to the second positive difference. Instead of instinct,

man has been endowed with a complex and delicate faculty of apprehension whose basic aspects are named *sense* and *reason* in our language. This cognitive capacity, residing in every normal individual, enables the human group to understand its needs and its environment, to communicate this understanding to its members, and to direct its action in accordance therewith. These facts are evident and unquestioned. They lead to certain great advantages as well as to grave dangers.

On the positive side, we may note first of all that the revealing power of the human cognitive power is very great. When properly exercised, it is capable of manifesting many details and whole ranges of facts completely concealed from the other animals. This results in modes of action far more complex and far more effective in satisfying needs than are found elsewhere. Second, the range of this cognitive power is very wide. It manifests many different kinds of fact. This results in a vast variety of human action and a multiple division of labor not found in any subhuman community. These are pure advantages. But the extension of insight leads to a third factor whose value is more ambiguous.

This is a great increase in the flexibility of human acts. This penetrates not merely to minor details which may be momentarily shifted in the light of new information but also to the basic patterns. Thus, human cultures differ greatly from one another, and even a single culture when highly developed goes through a fluid history in which not only its subordinate activities but also its basic patterns of life are thoroughly transformed. This unique capacity for self-direction and choice among divergent alternatives, made possibly by added knowing power, is attended by great risks and dangers.

#### EDUCATION AS A NECESSARY TRAIT OF HUMAN CULTURE

Knowledge which is both accurate and far-reaching is very hard to achieve. Mistakes may be made. Hence, a way of action promising great results may be chosen which, however, is not adequately grounded in the nature of things. Second, even though a mode of action is known by some to be sound, it may not be communicated with sufficient appeal to elicit the serious aspiration or even the approval of the community as a whole. Then either error must persist or force must be used. But men will not work with energy or de-

votion for something they cannot understand and love. This failure of that process of communication we know as education has caused the downfall of many civilizations. It is confronted with many obstacles. The problem of transmitting knowledge to other adults is serious enough. But this is accentuated by the fact of death.

The process of acquiring knowledge is slow and arduous. Only the human individual can do this. But his life is short. No sooner do men gain some insight than their powers weaken and they die. Their places, of course, are taken by newborn infants who, at first, know nothing at all. Unless the essential activities of the community and its guiding knowledge can be reincarnated in the coming generation, the human community will fall into an ignorant chaos and disintegrate. This transmission of knowledge is the task of education. Without it no human society can maintain itself. In this sense, it is natural or essential to human life. As a matter of fact, no community, no matter how primitive, has ever been observed which did not develop some means of communication by which this vital problem of the transmission of knowledge was not met in some way. But here an important distinction needs to be made.

All men are by nature social and communicative to some degree. There is a rough-and-ready way in which human activities tend to communicate themselves. The child is naturally curious and imitative.<sup>8</sup> He does what he sees others doing and picks up rudimentary skills in this way. The young apprentice works in the shop with his master and learns the necessary skills by doing. Sporadic trades and disciplines are picked up in this way. Basic attitudes are passed on by family discipline, the telling of tales, and tribal interaction. This rough-and-ready informal education is going on all the time in every type of society. In primitive communities it is sufficient to communicate the necessary knowledge and thus to hold the group together, the basic aim of all education. But it is subject to certain defects.

First of all, practical knowledge gained in this way by active imitation is deficient in theoretical insight. The object is known

8. For an analysis of this imitative process and its importance for an understanding of the history of civilization, cf. Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), pp. 215-16 *et passim*. Toynbee, however, does not distinguish this imitative procedure from formal education—a defect in his analysis.

only as it responds to external influence, not as it is in itself. Such procedures are justified only pragmatically. They may reach the desired end. But no one knows why. There is a lack of theoretical grounds and reasons. Unless this defect is corrected, the activity is apt to sink into a blind routine in which incidental matters are not clearly distinguished from what is essential and really grounded in the nature of things.<sup>9</sup>

This is the source of another important defect, inflexibility. A given routine may work in certain normal circumstances, not in others. When the situation changes, either the master of such a routine is left helpless or he must work out another procedure by slow trial and error which in turn has to be memorized and applied *ex post facto* to a given situation. It is only the abstract principles of pure theory which can free us from slavery to such detailed routines. This is why primitive cultures, weak on pure theory, are so clearly dominated by rigid cakes of custom.

Another defect is the incoherence and disorder of many blind routines devised to meet isolated needs and interests. An *ad hoc* unity may be achieved by mythical construction. But this is in constant danger of being overthrown by new and unwelcome fact. Genuine, stable integration of the whole culture can be attained only by universal principles grounded on observation.

These defects finally result in the loss of rational appeal which is one important factor in eliciting that common devotion to common goals which is necessary for healthy social life. Of course, intelligibility is not the only source of appeal. Experience shows that sheer familiarity, forceful rhetoric, and heroic examples can arouse intense devotion and even sacrifice for wholly unjustifiable purposes. But intelligibility also has a charm that must be taken into account. When reasonable questions cannot be answered, when certain practices seem to have no relation to basic cultural aims, and especially when these very aims become unjustifiable, then either reason itself must be discouraged, at the risk of social ignorance and error, or the common aspiration is dimmed and weakened.

The organized formal education of well-developed civilizations is an attempt to overcome these grave defects.

9. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 275-79.

## FOUR CIVILIZING FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

The formal school is the one institution of advanced society that is not found in primitive cultures—not even in a rudimentary form. What is this institution, and what are its essential functions?

First, the school is the home of pure theory. Practical disciplines are also taught; we now have schools of engineering, architecture, business, law, medicine, etc. But in the school these procedures are taught not pragmatically but in relation to those pure theoretical principles which lie at their root. The student must learn to become detached from all special needs and interests and to examine things as they really are in themselves. Of course, he is supposed to gain some mastery of active techniques that will work in certain circumstances. But he is also supposed to know something about *why* they work and *how* to change them very quickly to meet unusual circumstances. Such practical mastery comes only from the abstract study of pure theory which reveals the ultimate grounds and reasons for the way things act in the concrete. Thus, the formal student of engineering must know something of pure physics and chemistry, the formal student of medicine something of pure physiology, and the trained social worker something of human nature and the structure of the human group.

The peculiar function of the school is to cherish and to cultivate pure knowledge. Hence, it must be detached from concrete life and practice. The scholar is a man of leisure (*σχολή*), not in the sense that he does nothing, but in the sense that he must be released from the immediate demands of concrete action. The practical man resents this. To him it seems like doing nothing. The academy, the home of pure theory and learning for its own sake, is an ivory-tower playground, remote and impractical. As a matter of fact, this is a terrible mistake. Of course, truth has a value of its own. It is good to know something as it really is. But, in addition to this, it is directly relevant to human action. A practical procedure that is not grounded on the truth is never really practical. Pure theory is the unique possession of the academy. Its major aim is to cultivate such theory, to transmit the tools by which it is acquired, to preserve what has been gained, and to discover more. All other aims are derived from this.

A second aim that follows directly from this scholarly interest in pure theory is to extend our limited vision of the truth, to gain as complete a view as possible. The real scholar is never ready to be pigeonholed and compartmentalized. He is always on the alert for the connections of things, always prowling around the border lines which are supposed to separate one field from another. Once the love of truth has possessed a man's soul, he cannot rest satisfied with a partial view or anything short of the whole. This also requires the freedom of detachment, for the horizon of the man of action is always partial and restricted. It is the price he must pay for practical efficiency. The engineer is absorbed in building a bridge, the doctor in curing a particular patient. As a human being, he is concerned with living his own life as best he can. The statesman works for the welfare of his own country. Even the prophet and the saint are working for the welfare of mankind. But after all, what is man in the cosmos as a whole? In order to achieve the broadest perspectives, one must become detached like the traveler lost in a forest. If he is to gain a panoramic view, he must stop walking and climb a tree. The school is, therefore, the home of those integrative hypotheses and theories where an attempt is made to see things all together as they really are.

At first this seems irrelevant and even opposed to the more restricted ends of practice; but not on a second view. The most dreadful evils are perpetrated by persons obsessed by some limited good, but oblivious to others much more important. The range of values open to man is very rich. His ultimate end is surely to achieve as many of these as is possible to the highest degree of intensity for everyone. How else may he be guided to this ultimate end except by a detached study of man as a whole and the world in which he lives? But this means an all-inclusive view. It is a second derivative function of the school to interpret and to criticize the cultural pattern as a whole, to enable each student to understand its myriad functions and how they fit into a meaningful structure and, where they do not, to point out why.

In the third place, we must notice that the school is the source of that critical ferment and dynamism which is so characteristic of advanced civilizations and which distinguishes them from primitive societies. Such societies lack ivory-tower academies devoted to pure

theory. In a rudimentary form they possess religion, government, the family, military organization, agriculture, animal husbandry, production and exchange—every social institution known to man. There is only one we do not find; this is the school. They have no scholars free from practical preoccupations who are able to devote themselves to the study of things as they really are. Hence, they lack all basis for criticism. Having discovered some satisfying way of dealing with something in the concrete, they find that it “works.” So they are content and fall into a rut of intricate, haphazard practices, uniformly repeated through the centuries.

To the scholar, knowing something of human need and understanding the nature of the thing itself and the laws of its behavior, better ways of dealing with it soon occur. So the school, when it is really detached and functioning in a healthy way, is ever the source of new ideas and social fermentation. The man of action has no time for long-range theoretical perspectives. His horizon is that of the *status quo*. No matter how irrational or avoidable they may be, the problems here are sufficient for him. To gain grounded vision for the future, men must be freed from this restricted perspective and the practical obsessions that attend it. They must have time to reflect and think. They must have *schole*, freedom for truth. Men of affairs are never creative. In our own culture genuinely new ideas and criticisms have come from the students, the priests, the scholars with time for the abstract truth. In the institution of the school this value is socially recognized. The wish to break down its detachment and to absorb it into the maelstrom of concrete life is really a wish to return to the dead uniformity of primitive society.

Finally, in the fourth place, it is the duty of the school to teach these theoretical and practical principles and procedures in such a way as to elicit zeal and devotion. The teacher as an authority exercises a mediating, communicating function. His first duty is to gain firm ground, to have something sound and true to communicate. But this does not exhaust the matter. His next duty is really to communicate it, to see that it is presented in such a way as to take possession of the student. Even though the truth is known, if it cannot be transmitted and maintained, culture will die. At the level of the child it is a matter of instilling sound habits and convictions required for adult learning and practice. Here, what is known of



child psychology, intelligence, capacity for abstraction, and resistance to suggestion can be of great assistance. At the mature level, where it is largely a matter of transmitting ideas and theories, clarity, economy of words, and dialectical ability are more important. At every level deep conviction, rhetoric, and persuasive force are required of the genuine teacher. Education is the art of communicating truth. It has not been fully achieved until this truth not only lies within but actually possesses the mind and heart of the student.<sup>10</sup>

By way of summary we may say that the aim of education, as the realist sees it, is fourfold: to discern the truth about things as they really are and to extend and integrate such truth as is known; to gain such practical knowledge of life in general and of professional functions in particular as can be theoretically grounded and justified; and, finally, to transmit this in a coherent and convincing way both to young and to old throughout the human community.

### *The Educational Process and Curriculum*

As the realist sees it, this process of communication is both theoretical and practical; but the theoretical is prior.<sup>11</sup>

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#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PURE THEORY

The child, of course, should be interested in what he is learning. But it does not follow that whatever the child is interested in is, therefore, valuable. This is absurd. The skill of the elementary teacher lies in eliciting the interest of the child in the right things, especially in grasping the truth for its own sake. At the early stages no psychological or rhetorical technique should be neglected which is capable of strengthening this urge. When a mathematical principle has been understood, the child's attention should be drawn at once to the problems this enables him to solve. No opportunity should be lost to point out the principles of pure science which underlie modern technology. Language and grammar should be taught as essential phases of that mysterious process of apprehension by which the actual structure of things is mentally reflected and expressed, and by which such knowledge is achieved.

10. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, Bk. III, pp. 104-5. Edited by F. M. Cornford. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

11. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI.

Practical training in music, the manual arts, and the fine arts should, of course, be given. But, with the possible exception of advanced technical schools, the major emphasis must be placed on theoretical insight and assimilation. In this connection it is important to realize that the theory of practice is theory, not practice. To observe and to think about an intense activity is thinking, not acting. Thus, to visit debates in the United Nations or to watch the organized procedures of a factory belong to the realm of theory. Such concrete objects are apt to be very confusing. Too much is going on. Not much can be learned unless the way has been prepared by abstract analysis, which makes it possible to focus what is essential. But this is an attempt to gain insight. We are moving in the field of theory. Bearing this in mind, we can see that even the most progressive school with its "activity" curriculum is less unintellectual than is often supposed. Unless it loses all distinctive character, the school must devote itself to the cultivation of insight and understanding.

#### INSTRUMENTALISM AND IRRATIONALISM

The realist cannot agree with Dewey's lifelong polemic against classical philosophy and his instrumentalist attempt to degrade reason from its natural guiding position to a subservient one. When one follows Dewey in reducing all reflection to practical reflection, this is inevitable, since practical deliberation presupposes an interest already there. But this theory is not true. All problems are not practical.<sup>12</sup> There are theoretical problems as well. Investigating, finding out, and discovering are not the same as deliberating, scheming, and plotting.<sup>13</sup> Both are necessary. Dewey himself has clearly recognized this in a reply to his critics.<sup>14</sup> Thus at one point he says: "I expressly recognize the existence of direct perception of objects

12. Cf. B. Othanel Smith, William O. Stanley, and J. Harlan Shores, *Fundamentals of Curriculum Development*, pp. 558-72 (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1950), where the distinction between units of discovery and normative units is clearly recognized. These authors are certainly not unfriendly to the instrumentalist position. Hence, their recognition of this distinction (between the theoretical and practical) is all the more impressive.

13. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VI, chaps. i-ix, for a clear account of this important distinction.

14. *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, pp. 556-78. (Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. I.) Edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, 1939.

and of direct apprehensions of meanings and of things."<sup>15</sup> This "direct apprehension" of objects as they are is, of course, what realists have always meant by theoretical cognition. This is not the same as scheming and planning for an indeterminate future. Both types of inquiry occur, but theory always comes first, at least in some vague form. Theory has no practical presuppositions; but practice always presupposes some theory. Ultimate values, for example, must first be simply seen and understood before we can *do* anything about them. Practical reason alone, in the absence of pure insight, is left without any stable grounds and must fall prey to random desires and interests.

From a realistic point of view the effects of this neglect of direct cognition on education have been deplorable, though mixed with others which have been fruitful. Against a sterile traditionalism, it was certainly correct to urge that the child should not be regarded as a passive, uncommitted spectator, merely gaping at objects brought before him. The child is always active and committed. But among activities to which he is committed by nature are those of conceiving, judging, and arguing, by which he may come to understand what things are, and whether and why they are. With some such insight into the reasons and causes of himself and the objects around him, he may then hope to live like a man and to guide himself soundly in the trials and tribulations of history. Such understanding is anything but passive. It requires arduous effort and strict discipline. The special function of the school is to cultivate these activities and these disciplines.

It was correct, however, to point out that the school is not exclusively theoretical. It is profoundly concerned with practical problems and especially with the major problems of contemporary life. The child, of course, is living while he learns. But reason is not the whole of life; it is, rather, an essential part. The school is not the whole community but a vital institution within it. Its aim is not merely to plunge the student into the maelstrom of life. This happens anyway. Its function is, rather, to approach practical problems in a reflective, critical way, searching for the verifiable grounds of sane solutions. Its duty is to offer not merely raw experience but, rather, direction and guidance. This can come only from insight.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 568-69.

## THE ORDERING OF THE CURRICULUM

The practical pursuits of men are infinitely wide in their variety. Hence, the pressure of vocationalism has introduced a vast variety of new subjects into the curriculum. This has had a disintegrating effect which the realist deplores. How can an institution exert a rational and ordering effect when it is itself in an irrational and chaotic condition? This condition is due primarily to a skepticism concerning the existence of any real natural order on which an ordered curriculum might be firmly grounded. How strange to see the way in which many academies at the present time are spreading skepticism and mistrust of those very guiding faculties which it is their peculiar duty to improve and cultivate, like housebuilders devoting half their time to the destruction and mistrust of the homes they build! The realist is disturbed by this chaotic situation. He believes that it can be finally met only by the clearer and more widespread recognition of certain essential facts about man. These facts fall into a natural order which should be reflected in the curriculum. He is deeply concerned with the problems of distinguishing what is essential from what is incidental and of simplifying and ordering the curriculum.

There is certainly a basic core of knowledge that every human person ought to know in order to live a genuinely human life as a member of the world community, of his own nation, and of the family. This should be studied by every student and should be presented at levels of increasing complexity and discipline throughout the entire curriculum. First of all, (*a*) the student should learn to use the basic instruments of knowledge, especially his own language. In order to understand it more clearly and objectively, he should gain some knowledge of at least one foreign language as well. In addition, he should be taught the essentials of humane logic<sup>16</sup> and elementary mathematics. Then (*b*), he should become acquainted with the methods of physics, chemistry, and biology and the basic facts so far revealed by these sciences. In the third place (*c*), he should study history and the sciences of man. Then (*d*), he should gain some familiarity with the great classics of his own and of world literature and art. Finally (*e*), in the later stages

16. That is the logic we use in thinking intelligibly about reality in living discourse.

of this basic training, he should be introduced to philosophy and to those basic problems which arise from the attempt to integrate knowledge and practice. Here he should be shown that the world we inhabit is not pure chaos but possesses some stable structure on which certain moral principles at least may be solidly grounded. Of course there should be room for the choice of additional, peripheral subjects to train exceptional capacities, to realize special interests, and to prepare for the professions. But this central core, based on the nature of our human world, should be given to everyone.<sup>17</sup>

As to how these subjects should be taught, there are certain questions of efficiency, subject to quantitative measurement, which may be left to the sciences. There are other qualitative questions, however, which call for philosophic observation and analysis. Here are a few suggestions concerning each of the basic, core divisions.

Language and grammar could probably be far more vitally and coherently taught than they now are if they were conceived within the framework of a humane logic of intelligible discourse.<sup>18</sup> Such an approach would enable the student to understand concepts, propositions, and arguments as tools for the apprehension of reality and, thus, to grasp them in a far more vital and functional way through the uses to which they are put in actual thought and communication. The structure of language could then be understood, not as an arbitrary convention, but, rather, as a way of reflecting the nature of reality as it really is.

In the general study of science, method and critical experiments should be emphasized. Broad questions of epistemology and cosmology should not be dodged when relevant. Great care should be taken to refute the widespread delusion that these sciences have access to all the data there are and that all disciplined knowledge, therefore, belongs to them.

In the study of history, an intensive effort should now be made to

17. For a lucid discussion of vocationalism, cf. H. S. Broudy, "Realism and the Philosophy of Education," *The Return to Reason, op. cit.*, pp. 307-9.

18. For an account of the referential logic of intelligible discourse, cf. Henry Veatch, *Intentional Logic*, especially chaps. i and ii (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1952). Such a logic is not artificial but *humane* in the sense that it describes and analyzes the reflective processes as they are actually used in human thought.

The study of the great classics of art and literature, especially English literature, should, of course, be maintained at every stage of the curriculum from beginning to end. In the earliest stages of history and literature, great pains should be taken to avoid anything like an unbiased or objective approach. The young child cannot distinguish this from a negative attitude of disinterest or condemnation. Every effort should be made to present the great ideals of Western civilization to the child in as sympathetic and appealing a manner as possible. Outright condemnation is better than objectivity which kills the subject at once. The tendency of many teachers to treat young children as little Ph.D.'s has had a debilitating effect on our culture.

Foundational questions should never be dodged in any field. The philosophic problems to which they lead should also be discussed with different degrees of thoroughness at different age levels. Near the end of the process, every student should be exposed to a critical course in the history of philosophy, as in the French Lycée. Whatever the philosophic position of a teacher may be in whatever field, he should take pains to express it and to defend it as clearly, openly, and coherently as possible. This is the way to stimulate rational thought. The attempt to hide behind a cloak of supposed objectivity leads always to irrational bias and dogmatism.

### *The School and Society*

What is the relation of the school to the society that sustains it? Must it support the ideals of this society? Can it criticize such ideals? What are the limits of academic freedom? Such questions can be adequately answered only on the basis of a complete and

coherent social philosophy. There is no time for thorough treatment, but we may perhaps be able to make the realistic position intelligible in a brief sketch.

#### IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL UNITY

This position is based upon the natural needs and tendencies of human nature as these may be determined by empirical investigation. The general pattern of action which must be followed if realization is to be achieved is known in our tradition as the moral law or the law of nature. Men do not have to follow this law if they so wish. But then, as inescapable needs remain unrealized, they must suffer the natural sanctions of frustration, chaos, and misery.

One of these basic needs is the need for social order. Human life cannot be lived without co-operation. This principle has sometimes been questioned. But very few now would question it. The evidence is too strong. Certain reasons are also evident. Like other social animals, men possess certain general tendencies of sex, love of progeny, and gregariousness which naturally bring them together. Some find this a sufficient explanation of the social life of man.

Here, the realist cannot agree. Such an explanation may account for certain primitive forms of tribal organization. It cannot account for those more advanced and complex organizations consisting of millions of persons in constant interaction and transition, who are, nevertheless, bound together in the unity of what we call a nation, a culture, or a civilization. What is the source of this mysterious unity?

Many thinkers, including the German idealists, Oswald Spengler, and others, have held that it is necessary to assume the existence of some group mind or substance living a life of its own apart from that of the component individuals. But there is no evidence which, when critically examined, will really support this view. All we ever observe are individuals acting and thinking in certain ways. Others, more numerous in our Anglo-Saxon tradition, have, therefore, rejected this theory and have insisted that the group is nothing more than its individual members. Social instincts plus physical proximity are enough to explain the whole matter. Unfortunately, this is not enough. Men also possess antisocial and pugnacious tendencies which, unless they fall under sound direction, will bring disintegra-

tion. The hereditary equipment of man includes no factor sufficient to explain the persistent unity of a culture which enables millions of persons to act together in harmonious ways through extended intervals of time.

Realistic thought rejects both these extreme views, the theory of the group soul and the theory of individualism. Its greatest representatives have developed and defended a third and very different position. They point to the intellectual operations of men which can grasp things as they really are and can formulate common purposes in universal terms which may then be communicated and shared in common. They observe that while men often do not do so, they nevertheless on occasion do act in accordance with rational purposes and sometimes develop the persistent attitudes and habits required for such co-operation. This shows that they are certainly capable of doing so. These thinkers have concluded, therefore, that human group life, like so much that is most distinctively human, is something not inherited but learned and preserved by education.

A human society is not a single great soul or substance containing many different parts like the cells of a giant organism. On the other hand, it is not merely a number of separate and autonomous individuals jumbled together within a single physical space. It is, rather, a number of separate and autonomous individuals sharing invisible common purposes and the active attitudes and habits required to realize them in co-operation. The unity of the human group is to be found in its shared purposes and the view of the world which these presuppose. The very heart and core of a civilization is that communicable way of understanding things which determines its way of life. For want of a better term, we may call this guiding structure of ideas an *ideology*. The human community when fully developed is not a substantial unity but, rather, a moral unity of purpose and endeavor.<sup>19</sup>

Why, then, has this not been more clearly recognized? The answer to this question is that it has been clearly recognized by realistic social philosophers since the time of Plato and Aristotle. It is now clearly recognized by the communists. In our own tradition it has been obscured by materialistic theories which deny the moving

19. Cf. Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy*, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-89, for a more detailed account of this realistic theory.



power of thought, and sometimes even its existence. Ideas are invisible. They can neither be touched nor tasted nor measured through a microscope.

Some thinkers object that this is an overly intellectualistic theory. Man, they point out, is a many-sided creature, intellect being only a small part of his nature. Most of his so-called purposes arise from nonrational sources. Some of them are wholly unconscious. The idea of rationalizing the whole of life, therefore, is a mere ivory-tower fantasy. In answer, it must be said that no claim has ever been made by a responsible, realistic thinker that reason exhausts the whole of human nature. Reason, indeed, is only a tiny part. Most of our inherited tendencies are nonrational in character. But reason alone is capable of understanding them all and bringing them to ordered realization. Nor is this guiding power an illusion. Our inherited tendencies are very indeterminate and flexible. They are, therefore, open to further determination and direction. No claim is made that this has to be done, or even that it is usually done. Abundant facts show otherwise. The claim is, rather, that it is sometimes done precisely in those fields where human action is most effective, that it can be done for the whole of life, and that this must be done if disaster is to be avoided. Are these claims then unreasonable?

#### EDUCATION AND THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN

If inherited tendencies are not subject to direction, certain interesting conclusions follow. If voluntary co-operation is essential for human life and if learned purposes and attitudes are required for voluntary co-operation, then education is a basic need or right of man. Without it, human life cannot be lived. In our Anglo-Saxon tradition it has not yet been recognized as a human right but is still regarded as a privilege. In the recent United Nations Declaration it is clearly stated to be a universal human right, founded on human nature. It is not only advisable for a community but an essential duty to make sure that all children born within its boundaries are properly educated. From a realistic point of view this declaration is certainly correct. Without sound and compulsory education in the truth that has been discovered and without nurture in the moral practices founded on this knowledge, the human com-

munity must be punished by the natural sanctions of ignorance, fanaticism, and practical sterility.

How does this need compare with other basic rights? First of all, what are these basic rights? Realistic thought has struggled with this question through the ages since the time of Plato's *Republic*.<sup>20</sup> This has resulted in many statements, lists, and declarations, which it is interesting to compare. This tradition is still living and growing. No definitive statement has as yet been given. Much still remains to be learned about human nature. Perhaps the least inadequate list is that of the recent United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, which enumerates thirty basic rights and duties, readily divided into four major categories:

First (*a*), there are the social values of peace, harmony, and orderly co-operation without which human life cannot be lived at all. These require that three subordinate sets of needs be satisfied. (*b*) There are the rights of subsistence, the need for food, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc., based on the physical aspect of human nature. Every individual has a body which requires intelligent care. Then (*c*), there are the permissive rights and liberties, based on the fact that each human individual is an animate body capable of self-motion and self-direction. Hence, he has a natural right to so direct himself, as long as he respects the rights of others, and to participate in the formulation of common policies and decisions. Hence the right to be protected against violence, slavery, and arbitrary imprisonment. Finally, (*d*) there are the intellectual rights, based on the fact that each individual has a mind, requiring adequate nurture and training before it can be properly exercised. These include the right to news and all available information, the right of assembly and free expression of opinion, and, most basic of all, the right to education.

Each of these rights, of course, involves correlated duties. There may be other rights and duties besides these. But man by nature certainly possesses a body (*b*), a soul that moves and animates the body (*c*), and mental faculties that apprehend reality (*d*). Hence

20. For a discussion of Plato's theory of natural law, cf. John Wild, *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law*, chap. v. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

these rights must at least be realized to some degree if human life in society (*a*) is to be lived at all.

Now all these needs are essential. All should be satisfied. But the realist believes that nature also indicates a certain causal order among them. Thus, it is clearly the soul which normally moves the body and the mind which directs the soul. The lower support the higher and can even exist alone. From this, many infer that the lower are more valuable. But this is a mistake. Without activation and guidance from the higher functions, the lower lose all their *human* value. The body itself requires physical food which can exist perfectly well by itself. But what good is it to fill a body with excellent food when it is sick unto death? In the same way, what good is it to possess bodily health when the soul that animates it is diseased and corrupt? Of what use is freedom of action to a man whose mind is so corrupt that he confuses good with evil and is, therefore, bound to misdirect himself? The *value* of the lower functions depends upon their proper guidance from above. In this way, the higher levels of the hierarchy are causally more important and higher in value.

If this is true, it follows that of all the basic rights of man the right to education is the most precious and the most in need of adequate realization. On it will depend not only the attainment of its own peculiar values but that of all the rest as well. As his rational insight is to a wise man, so is a sound ideology sustained by effective education to a healthy society. As nothing worse can happen to a man than the corruption of his mind, so nothing more awful can happen to a community than the breakdown of its informal and formal education. This truth has long been recognized. Plato in his *Republic* tried to imagine what a community would be like where education was cultivated and respected as the guiding and, therefore, the most important social institution.<sup>21</sup> But this idea has never been put into practice and in modern times has been seriously neglected even theoretically. In our own country, for example, more money is spent every year on alcohol than on formal education.

21. For a discussion of Plato's views of education, cf. John Wild, *Plato's Theory of Man*, pp. 66-70, 174-205. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1946.

## THE SCHOOL AND ITS OBLIGATION TO DEMOCRACY

There are, of course, innumerable processes of informal communication and persuasion which constantly proceed outside the school through television, radio, books, newspapers, and every form of social intercourse. In all these myriad ways, ideas and attitudes are passed on and transformed. In the school an attempt is made to organize this process and to carry it on in a critical and disciplined way. Under ideal conditions this should clarify the common ideology, strengthen its appeal, and exert a stabilizing and cohesive effect upon the community as a whole. In fact, as we have seen, no community can be maintained in a sound condition without the adequate performance of this essential function. The disintegration of many civilizations can be traced to ideological breakdown and confusion.

It is in this context that the complex question of the school's obligation to its supporting society should be discussed. Surely it is under obligation to contribute to the welfare of this society and to defend its ideology against opposed points of view. In terms of our own situation, is it the duty of our schools to teach democracy? Should teachers at the higher levels be allowed to defend subversive doctrines? Are there limits to academic freedom? Should the ethos of internationalism be allowed to penetrate our schools? It is one thing to give a ready answer to these controversial questions, based merely on some national tradition or temperamental preference. It is something very different to work out an answer grounded on the nature of man and the necessary structure of human society. Let us now try to indicate the way in which realistic thought attempts to give such a grounded answer.

The modern democratic ideal is very rich. Many diverse streams of thought have contributed to it.<sup>22</sup> One of these is modern skepticism with its distrust of arbitrary fiat and the idea of checks and balances to prevent tyrannical rule. This is an important negative aspect of the idea. But there are other positive aspects which are equally important. The realist believes that the instrumentalist conception of democracy as a completely fluid process guided by no fixed principles is internally incoherent, incapable of resisting mass

22. Cf. Wild, *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-48, for an analysis of this conception.

tyranny, and incompatible with the best interpretations of democracy which have been historically developed in our tradition.

We are told that a "problematic situation" is the occasion for inquiry.<sup>23</sup> In trying to solve the "problem," we are to follow a process of experimentation that will indicate which way seems best. This way is then to be temporarily followed in all fields until further experimentation reveals what seems to work better. But how are we to distinguish between what is really problematic and what is only apparently so? How are we to judge the results of experimentation with no stable standards to guide us? In social and moral matters, how are we to distinguish between what really works and what is merely pleasing to large numbers of people?

Unless this distinction can be coherently and persistently made, we are on the road to mass tyranny which, as we ourselves have witnessed, is the most dreadful form yet known. Without an overarching pattern with sufficiently wide and intensive appeal to guide them into orderly modes of expression, the piecemeal pursuit of random interests will result in chaos. But men cannot exist together in chaos. Hence, this must lead to the intervention of arbitrary decree. When reason and voluntary effort no longer offer guidance, reliance must be placed on force, and civilization decays.<sup>24</sup> No purely negative and skeptical conceptions have ever been able to stir great multitudes of men to the concerted social effort which is required.

As a matter of fact, the great ideal of democracy, as it has been handed down to us, still embodies other positive ingredients. The most important of these is the conception of natural law, implying natural rights and duties, ultimately derived from realistic thought. Our protection of minority rights and our concern for public education have come from this source. The realist believes that no interpretation of the democratic ideal is adequate which omits this vital element. By democracy we should, therefore, mean a community organized on the basis of the law of nature, in which the natural rights of every individual are respected without regard for sex, or race, or creed, and in which, under the guidance of rational knowl-

23. *The Philosophy of John Dewey, op. cit.*, pp. 559-60.

24. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, Bk. VIII.

edge, all natural duties required for the realization of these needs are adequately performed.

This ideal is in agreement with science and the best philosophy of the West. It is firmly grounded in our own tradition. Hence, the realist believes that this ideal, together with its realistic, rationalistic presuppositions, should be adequately taught and defended in our schools. At the lower levels, it should be presented with as much persuasive power as possible; at the higher levels, critically and with more consideration of alternative views.

#### ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE LAW OF NATURE

It is at these higher levels of university and graduate school that the question of academic freedom becomes acute. In the high school, and even more in the elementary school, this freedom must take a subordinate place. Of course, no teacher should be expected to communicate to others what he himself really believes to be false. But those with militant convictions opposed to the commonly accepted principles of knowledge and to our basic way of life should not take over the task of elementary education. At this level, transmission is more important than criticism and discovery. The student is as yet in no position to examine and to weigh opposed masses of intricate evidence. He can neither understand the ultimate reasons for which he is being taught nor participate as yet in creative research. The teacher is an instructor rather than a guide. His duty is to convey as rationally and as persuasively as possible a knowledge of the necessary tools of learning and an outline of the truths and probable truths which are already accepted as a result of the use of these tools. If he cannot do this honestly, he should turn to higher levels where there is more place for criticism and originality, or if he does not care to gamble on the truth of his unusual beliefs, he should embrace another occupation.

But at the higher levels the situation is quite different. Here, the task of teaching merges with that of discovery. It is the duty of the teacher not only to transmit what is already known but to examine and test new theories and criticisms. The student is presumably now able to judge for himself and to participate more actively in the whole enterprise. The aim of this enterprise is to find and to maintain the truth. The soundness of the educational system at

all levels and the welfare of the whole community will ultimately depend on realizing this fundamental aim. Truth results from the determination of the human mind by the evidence and the evidence alone, apart from all external bias and pressure. Hence, a necessary condition for the discovery of truth is the freedom to take any position whatsoever to which an adequately trained mind is led by an examination of the evidence.

Freedom, of course, can exist without any truth emerging from the process of inquiry, which then is frustrated and futile. Freedom is not a *sufficient* condition, but it is a *necessary* condition for the conclusive testing and final discovery of truth. It is as simple as this—no freedom, no truth!

As knowledge advances, certain points of view and certain doctrines will be definitely disproved, and any attempt to revive them in the same context will be ruled out as incompetent. But this ruling on professional competence should be made by experts within the field itself, not by the interference of alien intruders. Any such intervention from the outside, even with respect to what are considered to be minor details, will compromise the whole academic system, for all its parts are interdependent and related. Truth cannot be decreed by arbitrary fiat but only by disciplined study of the evidence. An institution which cannot follow the argument wherever it may lead has ceased to be a university. It has become a propaganda bureau, and justifiable suspicion will be cast on all it teaches.

But what if vital mistakes are made that call for correction? Such mistakes are constantly being made. They will be corrected, if at all, by the results of free research and untrammelled criticism. From what other source can genuine correction come?

What if certain doctrines which are against the best interests of the whole community are defended? But what are the best interests of the community? What need ranks higher than the need for the truth as it really is? If a community no longer recognizes the guiding authority of such truth, it should abolish its educational system and return at once to primitive tribalism. As a matter of fact, such a community is already headed in this direction.

But what if an attack is made at the philosophical level on the power of reason itself and on its guiding authority? Such objections

are taken most seriously by those like the positivists who disbelieve in philosophic evidence and who hold that ultimate decisions must be made on the basis of sheer caprice.

The realist cannot take such a position seriously. First of all, it is inconsistent, for if it defends itself by debate and argument it must give reasons and thus take reason seriously. Secondly, it misreads the evidence. Its reasons are unfounded. A careful examination will show that, of all the natural powers of man, none is more sweeping, more exact, and therefore better fitted to guide human action than reason working together with sense. Hence, even such views, if they are competently defended by competent minds, must be given a hearing in the free forum of academic debate. They, too, can be refuted by a patient examination of the evidence and by disciplined argument. Such argument, in fact, is the only way to test our foundations and to become sure of them. If they cannot stand such a searching test, then our edifice is built on sand. If no firm foundations can be found anywhere, then knowledge is a delusion, and education a sham. The hope for a rationally ordered community must be abandoned.

Those who still cherish this hope are under a profound and binding obligation to defend academic freedom at the higher levels with the last ounce of their energy. Any attack upon it jeopardizes the whole teaching enterprise and the welfare of the community. It is a critical step toward the rule of force and tyranny.

But we may still be asked to examine the disruptive effects of doctrines subversive to the existing social order. These doctrines may upset man's peace of mind. They may lead to rebellion and strife within the community. They interfere with communal order and peace. What dangers, it may be asked, are greater than these? There are greater dangers—those that arise from the inexorable sanctions imposed by the laws of human nature and the real world in which men live.<sup>25</sup> These laws work implacably in complete independence of the feelings and fantasies, or even the peace, of any particular group. If education is neglected and corrupted, the whole

25. For examples of these *poenae naturales*, as they were later called, cf. Plato, *Republic*, Bk. IX, pp. 517A ff., 577C, and 588C ff. For an illuminating commentary, cf. G. P. Maguire, *Plato's Theory of Natural Law*, p. 178. Yale Classical Studies, No. X. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1947.



community will suffer the inevitable sanctions of mass ignorance, bias, and final tyranny. This is far more fearful than the temporary loss of complacency or harmony.

At the present time, we are facing a natural sanction of this sort in the field of international relations. Unless children all over the world are taught broader perspectives than those of their own particular nation-state, unless they are taught something of the needs of man, the history of mankind, and the urgent requirements of the world community, we are confronted with the dreadful sanction of war with weapons of unparalleled destructiveness. This sanction is also worse than the loss of intellectual or even of physical peace in a given community, for the whole world is involved. The realist is, therefore, convinced that all teachers at all levels at the present time are under a stringent obligation to broaden their perspectives beyond nationalistic limits. This applies especially to teachers of history, the humanities, social science, ethics, and social philosophy. But since the last two topics touch upon all fields, this applies in some degree to all teachers. Unless our students can soon learn something about becoming citizens of the world, they may not be citizens at all.

### *The School and the Individual*

As the realist sees it, the same natural standards which apply to society also apply to the individual.

#### INDIVIDUAL CHAOS AND SOCIAL ORDER

According to realistic philosophy, there is no natural opposition between the common good of the whole society and the good of the individual. When there is antagonism between the two, this is a sign of corruption. Either the social order has become deformed and needs correction or the educational process has failed to explain this order and has allowed the individual to misunderstand his natural end. The common good, so far as it is accurately conceived and adequately pursued by co-operative action, is not something which excludes the welfare of the individual. It includes this welfare as one of its parts. The aim of the individual is to realize his capacities, to live a complete and unhampered human life. He can-

not do this without the support of co-operative action, ordered in accordance with natural law.

During his whole life, and especially during infancy, his material needs (*b*) must be supplied with the help of others (see p. 40). As soon as he is able to move his body, he will wish to engage in activities which interest him (*c*). This also requires the aid and protection of those around him. If he is to satisfy his curiosity and learn how to direct himself wisely, he must receive an education (*d*). Without social peace and harmony (*a*), none of these rights can be realized. This natural order is not opposed to freedom, as Hobbes and Locke maintained. It is rather a necessary condition for individual spontaneity and freedom of choice. Unless it is approximated to some degree, human life itself becomes impossible.

Every individual is born into a community already organized in some such way with specific, positive laws and customs which have grown out of its own peculiar history and circumstances. He is born with the faculties of insight and free self-direction which distinguish him from all other animal progeny and entitle him to that respect which has been accorded him, in spite of his physical weakness, by the best traditions of the West. These faculties are the active sources of truth, freedom, and of all that is most specifically human in the world.

But at the beginning they are pure capacities devoid of actual content. The mind of the individual is a blank tablet, as yet uninscribed. His active tendencies are determined by nature but are so flexible and indeterminate that they may be specified in an indefinite number of ways.

Here we must also remember that each child is an individual with his own body and his own peculiar traits, occupying a unique division of space and time, and subject to divergent influences from surrounding sources. It is inevitable that he will develop ideas of his own, both true and false, and specific tendencies of his own, both sound and unsound, due to differences in hereditary endowment and environmental influence. This sets the problem of authority for all educational procedure. It has often been met in human history by one or the other of two opposite modes of procedure.

## THE AUTHORITARIAN ANSWER

On the one hand, there is the harsh and authoritarian way of meeting this challenge. It takes advantage of the physical weakness and mental confusion of youth to impose its own patterns by fear and by force. At the lower levels, it crushes disagreement by the threat of punishment. This is a source of weakness and rebellion. But at the higher levels it is even weaker. Here, it encourages imitation and discourages questions and discussion. It calls for humility on the part of the student but thinks of the teacher as a feudal lord, often confusing him with the truth he is supposed to teach, the only ground of legitimate authority.

This authoritarian method is often successful in transmitting intact to oncoming generations a rigid social order—its faults together with its virtues. But it does this only at the cost of wiping out spontaneity and originality. There is little chance of correcting ancient mistakes and enormities. The products of such a system may be able to act well as long as conditions remain the same. But when new challenges are confronted, they fail for want of originality. They have learned many useful habits, but not those of self-direction. They never outgrow their early masters and need a leader to take the place of those masters. They can perform virtuous acts, but not in a virtuous way, that is, spontaneously and alone.

They admire virtue, but, since they have mastered it only partially, they think of it in the Kantian manner as something harsh, unpleasant, and externally imposed. Such people and the education that has helped to produce them are characteristic of civilizations after they have passed their fruitful periods and are hardening into decadent rigidity. Such systems are apt to be rife with secret skepticism on the part of the teachers and rebellion on the part of the students. Hence, they easily pass into the opposite mode of procedure.

## THE BREAKDOWN OF AUTHORITY

This is the chaotic and child-centered method, which prides itself on being nonauthoritarian. It confuses any claim to truth with dogmatism and distrusts the very word truth. It fears to exert any pressure on the child and views punishment as arbitrary repression.

Grounded authority is undermined, so children tend to take authority into their own hands. This is even held to be democratic. Whatever the child is interested in thereby becomes a value worthy of being pursued, so far as it does not conflict with other interests of other children. Since even the childish mind can see the need of physical artifacts as a necessary condition for satisfying random interests, the scientific disciplines are maintained. In this area, reason should be a guide. But elsewhere, it is thought to be a mere instrument for the satisfaction of sporadic desires.

The humanistic disciplines are neglected or reduced to servile imitations of scientific method. One is skeptical of everything but the quantitative facts revealed by scientific measurement. An atmosphere of cynical materialism is spread throughout the whole community. Moral attitudes may be sustained by the processes of informal education which lag behind. But in the end, they too will be broken down if the disintegrative process is not arrested.

This nonauthoritarian procedure is really the breakdown of authority. It calls for humility on the part of the teacher but idolizes the student. It transmits very little except the disciplines of science, a vast respect for technology, and a general reductive materialism. The rest of life dissolves into a chaos of opposing groups and attitudes, more and more of which become engulfed in the rising tide of mass materialism, supported by the prestige of physical science and the massive artifacts of its technology. A premium is placed on individual initiative and originality, but great individual artists, statesmen, and philosophers seldom appear, for this requires humanistic discipline and the appeal of an overarching ideology.

The individual, lacking such schooling and bewildered by the conflict of opposing "spiritual" authorities, may pay lip service to that one which most impresses him by its exaggerated claims. But, in living his life from day to day, he will increasingly allow himself to be dominated by physical need and the physicalist ideas by which this attitude seems to be justified. Genuine originality is discouraged, and mass uniformity comes to dominate the scene.

Such a system transmits effectively only the rudimentary, physical aspects of a culture. The people it produces are helpless in meeting the ideological and political challenges that confront any advanced civilization. They think that all problems may be solved by scientific

method and technology. On the whole, they are careless about ideas and formal education and believe that they may be adequately defended by physical weapons alone. They hold such virtues as they possess from a cultural lag, without the support of rational criticism. These surviving virtues are apt to be mixed with irrelevant detail and outworn attitudes no longer adjusted to prevailing conditions. Hence, these people also regard virtue as something hard and antiquated and opposed to vital interest. The more intelligent smile at the whole idea and connect it with bygone aristocracy.

Such people, and the education that has helped to produce them, are characteristic of disintegrating civilizations. Their authorities and schools have broken down. They are ripe for tyranny and self-destruction.

#### THE NATURE OF REAL AUTHORITY

The realist believes that an answer to the critical problem of individual variation and egoism is to be found only in a clear understanding and proper exercise of genuine authority. The extreme methods we have just described are both perversions. The concept of authority is now widely neglected and misunderstood. For us, it has come to have evil connotations and is rarely used in a good sense. This is because we think of knowledge subjectively, as something wholly contained within the mind of the knower and as part of his personal being. We then conceive of authority in simple, binary terms, as somebody lording it over others and imposing his attitudes upon them by force and guile. This is the authoritarianism we have just described, which inevitably and rightly calls forth rebellion and chaos. It is not authority at all but its first insidious corruption.

Error is the creation of the erring subject. But knowledge does not belong in this way to the knowing agent. It is relational in structure and is grounded on the independent being of objects it has not constructed. Genuine authority, therefore, when it is properly exercised, has a trinary not a binary structure. First, it must be grounded on independent being which is known as it really is. This is the basis of all authority. Then, there are the free minds of those who are ignorant but prepared to receive it. The authority exercises a mediating function between the two, transmitting the truth to these minds without jeopardizing their freedom.

Subrational animals have to be controlled, so far as they are controlled at all, by force and guile. This method cannot be used on human agents without destroying their freedom. The trained mind with access to the evidence can find out for itself, given time and discipline. But time is short and discipline is arduous. Is there any way by which the process can be speeded up so that the vast ranges of knowledge that need to be preserved can be conveyed without the loss of freedom? There is such a way, the way of authority, which lies at the heart of all human education.

The process must begin with respect for the teacher. Without this, no one can learn from another. It must be elicited by external pressure and suggestion. But once initiated, the process advances without the use of force by persuasion and argument. At the lower levels mild rewards and punishments may be used effectively, but only with an eye on the future, to encourage the development of self-directive habits which will eventually act spontaneously. The real teacher is exercising a self-superseding function, guiding others to an independent reality, which they must grasp by themselves. Hence, he never confuses this ground with his own opinions. At the higher levels, his aim is to make himself vanish, so far as possible, that the truth may be revealed. This method calls for humility from both parties. Above them stands the truth.

The student is confronted with a range of existence for which he is in no sense responsible. His duty is to learn those arduous operations by which here and there it may be revealed to him as it really is. One tiny grain of truth is worth more than volumes of opinion. He has not learned how to think and to act in a disciplined way until he can do so spontaneously and with real pleasure. He will never think of virtue as arbitrary and alien, but rather as something very natural and human. With his eye fixed on stable, universal principles, both his thought and his conduct will manifest that creative flexibility in detail which always goes with understanding.

In this way, by the proper exercise of authority, the sound structure of a whole culture, including its scientific aspects, may be maintained without the loss of individual spontaneity and freedom. The greatest weaknesses of materialism lie in its incapacity to offer coherent explanations of cognitive apprehension, communication, and choice. It is a sign of the failure of intellect and will. Hence, the

best and only effective answer is to operate these faculties everywhere. Where great numbers of individuals are thinking for themselves, discussing their problems with the aid of a sensitive press and literature, and choosing their own way in the light of coherent principles, there is little danger of domination by oversimplified, reductive views.

The necessary condition for this is the existence of an overarching ideology, sound enough to account for the most evident facts of experience and appealing enough to call forth interest and devotion.

### *The School and Religion*

History shows that, in the past, this sound and appealing ideology has constantly been maintained in different cultures by a religious synthesis. This is certainly true of our own civilization which was established on the basis of a Christian view of the world. Many ideas and attitudes derived from this source are, of course, still active. But the weakening of Christianity in modern times and its division into a multitude of conflicting sects has placed formidable obstacles in the path of any attempt to revive it educationally.

#### THE PROBLEM

Many of these sects have maintained their own traditions in such a rigid and authoritarian manner that they now include antiquarian ideas and attitudes which are wholly out of touch with modern life and knowledge. Any attempt to introduce them into the school system by an appeal that is wholly emotional and irrational will conflict with the rational, critical spirit of this institution and will probably fail. At the other extreme, an effort to deal with this topic in a wholly detached and objective way is apt to kill all real interest and to end in cynical indifference. Even to teach it in a university as one special topic among many others will involve a neglect of its synthetic functions. Religion is either something basic and overarching or nothing but words and meaningless acts.

But to turn over the public schools and even important private institutions to a single sect would cause justifiable resentment and open conflict. This is also impossible.

## REALISM AS INDEPENDENT OF ANY CULTURE OR SECT

Realistic philosophy is not committed to the point of view of any particular religious group. It has been cultivated in China, India, and the Middle East. It became established in the West through the influential writings of Plato and Aristotle long before the advent of Christianity. In spite of the accidents of history, which have sometimes associated it with certain religious organizations, it is not the property of any single sect.

At the present time, realistic thinkers are generally sympathetic to religion. There are two basic reasons for this. First, there is the evidence which seems to indicate that the world is not necessarily existent, but dependent and contingent; and the different types of causal argument based on this evidence have convinced many thinkers of the existence of a self-sustaining cause. Secondly, there are the historical facts which seem to show that the most sacrificial generosity, the deepest humility, the most intense aspiration, and, in short, the highest quality of human life has been elicited by religious faith. This seems true the world over. The maintenance of human culture requires the commitment of millions of individuals to common purposes which elicit real devotion. Many experienced observers with some knowledge of human history doubt if anything short of religious faith is capable of exerting such a widespread and intensive appeal to the minds and hearts of men. Many types of moral argument have been based on this evidence. Can it be that the most authentic human life and the soundest culture are dependent on sheer delusions with no basis in fact?

Such lines of argument have been most convincingly developed by Western thinkers. Hence, very few realistic philosophers are now antireligious. Most of them would favor an attempt to revive and to strengthen our religious roots. But there is no agreement concerning the way in which those serious obstacles we have considered may best be met. Many divergent approaches need to be made. We shall conclude with a few comments on experiments that are already under way.

## SOME REALISTIC SUGGESTIONS

It seems absurd that religious instruction should be altogether excluded from our public schools and colleges, so that the ordinary



student will continue to emerge with almost no disciplined information concerning the basic ideas and attitudes on which his own culture is founded. Some effort, at least, should be made to provide reliable information about religion. Perhaps this can best be done at the elementary levels in history courses and in the reading of literature. It is important that exclusive reliance should not be placed on secondary sources and that the student be brought into vital contact with the original classics of the great world religions. Such a procedure should also be followed at the higher levels with more concentration and discipline.

This is only a first step, of course, in attempting to correct that profound religious ignorance which is such a depressing feature of current education.

In institutions that are properly prepared, further steps might be taken to give the student a chance to understand religion more systematically from within. This could be done by allowing the representatives of different religious traditions to present their divergent points of view in voluntary courses—which is already being attempted at the university level. I see no reason why such procedures should not also be tried out in the high school when the time is ripe.

The less rational modes of religious thought will, of course, be at a disadvantage. Any appeal which is based exclusively on traditional forms of emotion, and which ignores rational and scientific evidence, will at once have the life-giving ethos of sound institutional teachings pitted against it. This may at first cause further prejudice. But there are, fortunately, several living types of religion which do not discount human reason. In the long run, the skeptical, critical ethos of formal education will be a valuable check on extravagance, bigotry, and superstition which are ever-present dangers, though not perhaps as insidious as those of cynicism and indifference.

In all fields, an effort should be made to call the student's attention to foundational problems and issues and to encourage him to work out hypothetical syntheses of his own in a disciplined and responsible way. In all fields, at every level in every way, an attack should be made on the prevalent idea that education is the same as negation and that the more intelligent a person is, the less he believes. This is radically false.

Personal life is impossible without guiding convictions; and the

greater the mind of the person, the broader, richer, and more coherent are his beliefs. The disintegrated mind is never really educated. It may be brilliant in a narrow field; but, deprived of order and coherence, it sheds no light and offers no stable guidance in the ocean of existence. Leaving its bearer to be blown about by random winds and currents, it is a major threat to personal life and a menace to civilization. Formal education is an organized attempt to meet this desperate natural need. The realist believes that the renewed cultivation of philosophy in a careful manner as a responsible discipline with data, problems, and verifiable conclusions of its own may now contribute once again to the meeting of this need.

He also hopes that if such steps are taken, new bridges may begin to be built across the dreadful chasm that now so tragically separates much of formal education from the extracurricular life of the community. Realistic philosophy has always kept in close touch with the sound common sense of mankind which is radically realistic, so long as it is not confused by mistakes and sophistries. This philosophy has conceived of its task, not as that of negating this native insight of mankind which precedes all organized reflection, nor of startling it with novel hypotheses which contradict its normal apprehensions. It has thought of itself, rather, as exercising a therapeutic function, first accepting this native faculty together with its normal insights, and then expanding, purifying, and refining them to meet the intellectual needs of life. Is this not also true of formal education?<sup>26</sup>

This civilizing institution presupposes a vast number of informal learning processes which go on anyway. Its task is not to negate these natural procedures or to replace them by something artificial, but, rather, to care for them—purifying, extending, and ordering them so that they may achieve more adequate fulfilment. If this were more widely recognized, both inside and outside the profession, education might once more elicit that profound respect which it truly deserves as the guardian of rational light and the guiding beacon of our culture.

26. Cf. Plato, *Sophist*, pp. 226–30D.

### CHAPTER III

## *Thomist Views on Education\**

JACQUES MARITAIN

### *Basic Orientation*

It is advisable, I think, to draw a clear distinction between the basic philosophical issues on which theories of education depend and the questions of a more practical nature which bear on concrete application and the technique of education. So I shall, as a rule, divide into two parts the considerations that I should like to submit, one dealing with philosophical principles, the other with practical application.

In a general way, I would say that the Thomist outlook is in opposition to the philosophical systems (notably pragmatism) to which progressive education most often appeals for support, but agrees in many respects with the practical ways and methods of progressive education when they are not led astray by prejudice or ideological intemperance, and decidedly favors their concern with the inner resources and vital spontaneity of the pupil. In many cases, and from a practical point of view, the conflicts of schools indicated in chapter i seem to me to relate less to absolutely incompatible views than to the relative emphasis which is to be put on various complementary aspects. In educational matters, as in all matters dealing with man's life, what is of chief importance is the direction of the process, and the implied hierarchy of values.

### CONCERNING PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES

Underlying all questions concerning the basic orientation of education, there is the *philosophy of knowledge* to which the educator consciously or unconsciously subscribes. It is regrettable that more

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often than not this philosophy of knowledge, in our current practice, is accepted ready-made rather than critically examined.

Thomist philosophy maintains that there is a difference in nature between the senses (where knowledge depends on material action exercised upon bodily organs, and which attain things in their actual and singular existence but only as enigmatically manifested by the diversified physical energies they display) and the intellect (which is spiritual in essence and attains, through the universal concepts it brings out from sense experience, the constitutive features of what things are).

This basic point is denied by empiricism. According to empiricist philosophy there is no distinction of nature, but only of degree, between the senses and the intellect. As a result, human knowledge is simply sense-knowledge (that is, animal knowledge) more evolved and elaborated than in other mammals. And not only is human knowledge entirely encompassed in, and limited to, sense-experience (a point which Kant, while reacting against Hume, admitted like Hume) but, to produce its achievements in the sphere of sense-experience, human knowledge uses no other specific forces and means than the forces and means that are at play in sense-knowledge.

Thus, from the Thomist point of view, the empiricist theory of knowledge is of a nature inevitably to warp, in the long run, the educational endeavor. And this happens in a rather insidious way: For if it is true, in actual fact, that reason differs specifically from the senses, then the paradox with which we are confronted is that empiricism, in actual fact, uses reason while denying the specific power of reason, on the basis of a theory which reduces reason's knowledge and life, which are characteristic of man, to sense-knowledge and life, which are characteristic of animals. Hence, there are confusions and inconsistencies which will inevitably reflect on the educational work. Not only does the empiricist think as a man and use reason, a power superior in nature to the senses, while at the same time he is denying this very specificity of reason, but what he speaks of and describes as sense-knowledge is not exactly sense-knowledge, but sense-knowledge *plus* unconsciously introduced intellectual ingredients; that is, the empiricist discusses sense-knowledge in which he has made room for reason without recognizing it. This confusion comes about all the more easily as, on the one hand, the

senses are, in actual existence, more or less permeated with reason in man, and, on the other, the merely sensory psychology of animals, especially of the higher vertebrates, goes very far in its own realm and imitates intellectual knowledge to a considerable extent. It is thus possible to go a long way in educating a child of man as if he were a child of some simian particularly evolved and supposedly civilized. An educational theory based on empiricism will cover the whole development of the youth and be interested in the cultivation of the rational and spiritual powers of his mind, but in doing so it will be ignorant of the very nature of these powers, disregard their proper needs and aspirations, and bring everything back to the ambiguous level of the development of a child of man in terms of simple animal life and development.

Let us go a step further. In the eyes of Thomist philosophy any merely instrumentalist theory of knowledge is open to similar objections: by reason of the empiricist presuppositions on which any merely instrumentalist philosophy of knowledge rests. It is an unfortunate mistake to define human thought as an organ of response to the stimuli and situations of the environment, that is to say, to define it in terms of animal knowledge and reaction, for such a definition exactly corresponds to the way of "thinking" peculiar to animals without reason. The truth of the matter is just the opposite. It is because human ideas attain being, or what things *are* (even if they do so in the most indirect manner, and in the symbols of physicomathematical science); it is because human thought is a vital energy of spiritual intuition grasping things in their intelligible consistency and universal values; it is because thinking begins, not with difficulties, but with *insights* and ends in insights whose truth is established by rational demonstration or experimental verification, not by pragmatic sanction—that human thought is able to illumine experience and to dominate, control, and refashion the world. At the beginning of human action, in so far as it is human, there is truth, grasped or believed to be grasped, for the sake of truth. Without trust in truth, there is no human effectiveness.

Thus, for Thomist philosophy, knowledge is a value in itself and an end in itself; and truth consists in the conformity of the mind with reality—with what is or exists independently of the mind. The intellect tends to grasp and conquer being. Its aim and its joy are

essentially disinterested. And "perfect" or "grown-up" knowledge ("science" in the broad Aristotelian sense) reaches certainties which are valid in their pure objectivity—whatever the bents and interests of the individual or collective man may be—and are unshakably established through the intuition of first principles and the logical necessity of the deductive or inductive process. Thus, that superior kind of knowledge which is wisdom, because it deals not only with mastering natural phenomena but with penetrating the primary and most universal *raison d'être* and with enjoying, as a final fruition, the spiritual delight of truth and the sapidity of being, fulfils the supreme aspiration of the intellectual nature and its thirst for liberation.

There is no other foundation for the educational task than the eternal saying: It is truth which sets man free. It appears, by the same token, that education is fully human education only when it is liberal education, preparing the youth to exercise his power to think in a genuinely free and liberating manner—that is to say when it equips him for truth and makes him capable of judging according to the worth of evidence, of enjoying truth and beauty for their own sake, and of advancing, when he has become a man, toward wisdom and some understanding of those things which bring to him intimations of immortality.

#### CONCERNING PRACTICAL APPLICATION

I just spoke of the stage where intellectual virtues have come to completion and spoke of knowledge as science. This led us far beyond the scope of school and college education. It must be pointed out, in particular, that, precisely because scientific knowledge is perfect or "grown-up" knowledge, it is fitted to adults, not to children—to those who know, not to those who are in the process of acquiring knowledge. As to the techniques of education, Thomist philosophy, which insists that man is body as well as spirit and that nothing comes into the intellect if not through the senses, heartily approves of the general emphasis put by progressive education on the essential part to be played in the process by the senses and the hands and by the natural interests of the child. It also emphasizes sense-training (both as to perception and memory) and the direct experiential approach—but on the condition that all this should be

directed toward the awakening of the intellectual powers and the development of the sense of truth.

A crucial point should be emphasized in this connection.<sup>1</sup> We have to understand the far-reaching significance and the practical import of the distinction between *natural intelligence* and those "habitus" or *ἐξέτις* which Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas called *intellectual virtues*. Art (each of the specifically distinct arts), science (each of the specifically distinct sciences), and wisdom, are intellectual virtues. Really to know a science is to possess the intellectual virtue which constitutes this science in the soul. And the intellectual virtues are special energies which grow in intelligence through exercise in a given object, as superadded perfections, superior in quality to the capacity of what I call *natural intelligence*, that is to say, of intelligence considered in its bare nature. Thus we have two quite different states for intelligence: *natural intelligence* and *intelligence as scientifically formed and equipped*, or, in Thomist language, *intelligence perfected by the intellectual virtues*.

My contention is that education, especially liberal education, has essentially to cultivate and liberate, form and equip intelligence, and to prepare for the development of the intellectual virtues, but that this development itself, once the threshold of virtue has been crossed, is necessarily particularized to a given branch of knowledge. So no *universal knowledge* is possible at the level of intellectual virtues or at the level of science (except that kind of universal knowledge which knows things only in their fundamentals and which is proper to wisdom, the supreme intellectual virtue). But a kind of *universal knowledge* is possible at the level of *natural intelligence* or at a level which is neither scientific nor philosophical. At this level of natural intelligence, the youth can be offered, not scientific knowledge supposedly reduced and concentrated, but some real, integrated, and articulate, though imperfect, understanding—what Plato would have called "right opinion"—about the nature and meaning of that knowledge which is proper to men in possession of the intellectual virtues. Moreover, at the same time, the youth can get a few basic insights into the main acquisitions with which this knowledge has provided

1. Another point would deal with the typical "worlds of knowledge" which are peculiar to the main stages of the educational process. Cf. my book *Education at the Crossroads*, pp. 60–62. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1943.

the human mind. Education must never give up the idea of universal knowledge, but it must realize all the practical implications of this principle that universal knowledge is possible only at a nonscientific level, at the level of natural intelligence, not at the level of science and the intellectual virtues. Universal knowledge to be acquired by the youth at the level of natural intelligence is precisely the job of that which I consider essential for high-school and college years, namely, basic liberal education.<sup>2</sup>

Basic liberal education is liberal education directed to the natural intelligence of youth, with thorough respect for this intelligence, for its peculiar behavior still steeped in imagination as well as for its need for unity, but with no pretension to go beyond it and enter the sphere proper to the intellectual virtues. The genuine task is neither encyclopedic inculcation nor what I should like to call nursery accommodation: it is basic liberal education, dealing with universal knowledge at the level of natural intelligence and using natural intelligence's own approach.

### *Educational Aims and Values*

#### THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

*Concerning Philosophical Principles.* The primary aim of education in the broadest sense of this word is to "form a man" or rather to help a child of man attain his full formation or his completeness as a man. The other aims (to convey the heritage of culture of a given area of civilization, to prepare for life in society and for good citizenship, and to secure mental equipment required for implementing a particular function in the social whole, for performing family responsibilities, and for making a living) are corollaries and essential but secondary aims. (Parenthetically, it must be observed that education in the broad sense of the word continues during the entire life-time of every one of us. The school system is only a *partial* and *inchoative* agency with respect to the task of education.

2. It is because he misses the notion of basic liberal education that Professor Boas, who takes pleasure in assailing the "mythological monster known as the cultivated man," thinks that in the space of a four-year college education a student cannot attain this goal. (Ann Arbor Conference on Higher Education. Cf. *New York Times*, November 26, 1952.) He would be right if college education had to achieve its task at the level of *science*, instead of at the level of *natural intelligence*.



Moreover, because it deals essentially with that which can be taught, it refers to the education and formation of intelligence more than of the will.)

It is clear that the primary aim is determined by human nature. The question, "What is man?" is the unavoidable preamble to any philosophy of education. It has two implications: first, a philosophic or "ontological" implication, dealing with human nature in its essential being; second, a scientific or "empiriological" implication, dealing with human nature in the phenomenal characteristics that lie open to our modern sciences of observation and measurement. These two implications are in no way incompatible; they complement each other.

With respect to both the mind and the body, science, and especially empirical psychology, provides us with invaluable and ever growing information, by which our practical approach to the child and the youth must profit. But, by itself, it can neither primarily found nor primarily guide education, for education needs primarily to know what man *is*—what are the constitutive principles of his being, what is his place and value in the world, what is his destiny. This has to do with the philosophical knowledge of man—including additional data which relate to his existential condition.

The Thomist idea of man coincides with the Greek, Jewish, and Christian idea: man as an animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect; and man as a free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God; and man as a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and to the freedom of grace, whose supreme perfection consists in love.

At the same time Thomist philosophy lays stress on the basic psychosomatic unity of the human being (one single substance composed of matter and a spiritual "form" or *entelechy*)—thus affording us with a philosophical key for a sound interpretation of great modern discoveries in neurology and psychiatry. Also, it lays stress on the notion of human personality. Man is a person, who holds himself in hand by his intelligence and his will. He does not exist merely as a physical being. There is in him a richer and nobler existence: He has spiritual superexistence, through knowledge and love. He is thus, in some way, a whole, and not merely a part; he

is a universe unto himself, a microcosm in which the great universe can be encompassed through knowledge. Through love he can give himself freely to beings who are to him, as it were, other selves; and for this relationship no equivalent can be found in the physical world.

Man evolves in history. Yet his nature as such, his place and value in the cosmos, his dignity, rights, and aspirations as a person, and his destiny do not change. Consequently, the secondary aims of education have to be adjusted to changing conditions in successive historical periods; but as concerns the primary aim, as well as the intrinsic domination it exercises on the secondary aims, it is sheer illusion to speak of a ceaseless reconstruction of the aims of education.

*Concerning Practical Application.* Human nature does not change, but our knowledge of it may be philosophically warped or inadequate. Moreover, this knowledge steadily progresses in the field of the factual and empiriological sciences.

The philosophical knowledge of man which reigned as a rule in the last three centuries was basically Cartesian, and Thomist philosophy is strongly opposed both to Cartesian dualism and to the idealist and narrowly rationalistic bias it made prevalent in education. On the other hand, while shifting toward a philosophical outlook which is equally warped, but in the opposite way (the empiricist, positivist, or materialist bias), our epoch witnesses outstanding progress in the experimental sciences of man.

Accordingly I would say that both in its reaction against Cartesian rationalism and its heedfulness of the achievements of modern psychology, progressive education provides us with invaluable improvements. Our understanding of the realities connected with the aims of education has become truer and deeper. For example, due attention has been paid to the unconscious, the instincts, the nonrational elements in the psyche of the child. At the same time, educational techniques are in a process of continual broadening and enriching, so that it is right to speak of a ceaseless reconstruction of the *means* of education, so long as such reconstruction does not indulge in errors deriving from pseudophilosophical extrapolation, like the overemphasis on sex and sexual complexes due to cheap psychology and spurious Freudianism, or the "cultural epoch" theory of G.

Stanley Hall with free rein to be given to the instincts of the child coming to civilization through savagery. The greatest attention must be paid in this connection to Piaget's experiments and similar researches and to renewals in the educational approach, such as those advocated by Montessori.

#### THE HIERARCHY OF VALUES

*Concerning Philosophical Principles.* There is no unity or integration without a stable hierarchy of values. Now in the true hierarchy of values, according to Thomist philosophy, knowledge and love of what is above time are superior to, and embrace and quicken, knowledge and love of what is within time. Charity, which loves God and embraces all men in this very love, is the supreme virtue. In the intellectual realm, wisdom, which knows things eternal and creates order and unity in the mind, is superior to science or to knowledge through particular causes; and the speculative intellect, which knows for the sake of knowing, comes before the practical intellect, which knows for the sake of action. In such a hierarchy of values, what is infravalent is not sacrificed to, but kept alive by, what is supervalent, because everything is appendent to faith in truth. Aristotle was right in sensing that contemplation is in itself better than action and more fitted to what is the most spiritual in man, but Aristotelian contemplation was purely intellectual and theoretical, while Christian contemplation, being rooted in love, superabounds in action.

Education obviously does not have to make of the child or the youth a scientist, a sage, and a contemplative. Yet, if the word "contemplation" is taken in its original and simplest sense (to contemplate is simply to *see* and to enjoy seeing), leaving aside its highest-metaphysical or religious-connotations, it must be said that knowledge is contemplative in nature, and that education, in its final and highest achievements, tends to develop the contemplative capacity of the human mind. It does so neither in order to have the mind come to a stop in the act of knowing and contemplating, nor in order to make knowledge and contemplation subservient to action, but in order that once man has reached a stage where the harmony of his inner energies has been brought to full completion, his action on the world and on the human community, and his creative

power at the service of his fellow-men, may overflow from his contemplative contact with reality—both with the visible and invisible realities in the midst of which he lives and moves.

While dealing with the first steps in man's formation, education must itself be aware of the genuine hierarchy of intellectual values, be guided by such awareness in its task of preparation, preserve in the youth the natural germs of what is best in the life of the mind, and equip them with the beginnings of those disciplines of knowledge which matter most to man. It is a pity to see so many young people bewildered by highly developed and specialized, but chaotic, instruction about anything whatever in the field of particular sciences and miserably ignorant of everything that concerns God and the deepest realities in man and the world. What we are faced with, in this regard, is a kind of regular frustration—by adults and the general organization of teaching—of certain of the most vital needs and aspirations, and even of the basic rights, of intellectual nature in young persons.

*Concerning Practical Application.* One of the vices of the sort of education described in the Lynds' *Middletown*<sup>3</sup> was not only to treat the child as a piece of inert matter to be moulded from the outside but also to try to make him into a reduction or imitation of an adult, a kind of perfect manufactured intellectual dwarf. Hence, the prevalence of a merely theoretical and abstract formation, in accordance with an ideal of the adult man himself which, by the most confusing abuse of language, is often described as "contemplative," though it has nothing to do with genuine contemplative virtues, and refers in actual fact to that particular selfishness of the mind which comes about when intelligence is both separated from things—occupied only with handling and moving ideas and words—and separated from the emotional and affective tonus of life. This ideal was in its heyday during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was far removed from the Aristotelian one; it originated, philosophically, in Cartesian rationalism and, socially, in a trend, among the elite, toward a kind of lofty Epicurean freedom. According to it, the enviable condition of the man of leisure was to sit down before the spectacle of the achievements of the human mind

3. Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd, *Middletown: A Study of Contemporary American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929.

and to taste the pleasure of "general ideas" without engaging either his heart or his intellect in the reality of things.

Out of gear as it may have been, the pragmatist protest against such an attitude was sound in its origin. Concern for action and practical life was to be rehabilitated in education. The misfortune was that the true hierarchy of values was broken at the same time. We have to integrate many views of pragmatism and progressive education—but at their appropriate place, which is secondary, and as regards especially the ways and means of education—in a nonpragmatist conception intent on the organic order of knowledge and directed toward wisdom.

As I pointed out above,<sup>4</sup> the order of human virtues come to completion demands that practical action on the world and on the human community superabound from contemplation of truth, which means not only contemplation in its purest forms but, more generally, intellectual grasping of reality and enjoyment of knowledge for its own sake. But in the educational process, what we have to do with is not human life as come to perfection; it is the very first beginnings of the lifelong movement toward such an ultimate stage. Then the perspective is reversed. Action must come first—and concern for application, practical significance, and the impact of the things which are taught on man's existence—not for action itself as final end, but in order to awaken progressively the child and the youth to seek and perceive truth for the sake of truth, to exercise their power to think, and to sense the joy of intellection. *From praxis to knowledge*, this is the normal method of education, especially in its first steps.

### *Educational Process*

The remarks I just made about action must be qualified on a particular point: If it is a question of the atmosphere of the classroom, contemplation, in a sense, and especially as regards young children, should come first; in Montessorian classes, which obey the two fundamental rules of *silence* and *personal effort*, the behavior of children changes completely; they move as they work, but with no agitation, and become so concentrated and so absorbed in their task that the visitor in these noiseless classrooms is surprised to have

4. See *supra*, p. 65.

the impression of a monastic climate. Miss Hélène Lubienska de Lenval observes that these children simply reveal, in an appropriate environment, the contemplative capacity peculiar to early childhood (ages two to eight). They are contemplative, as she puts it, "in the sense that they are capable of steadily fixing their attention by absorbing themselves in a disinterested admiration with no verbal manifestation (the latter will arise in due time after a long silent maturation). This contemplation seems akin to poetic inspiration." And because "it comes about most often before objects that represent dimensions and numbers," she calls it "Pythagorean contemplation."<sup>5</sup> This contemplative faculty of the child is ephemeral, it disappears at the moment when discursive thought replaces intuitive thought. But something of it remains, for those who once enjoyed it show remarkable powers of attention in later years.

If we pass now to the question of learning by way of solving problems, I would say that this method of learning is normally a way to truth-grasping or "contemplative" learning, just as *praxis* is a way to knowledge. It is a normal auxiliary means, destined to sustain personal initiative and interest, and to prevent contemplative learning from degenerating into passivity and inert docility. For there is no contemplative learning if it does not respond to and stimulate a searching effort of the mind, an anxiety to know. Truth, in education, can be betrayed in two ways: either by substituting mechanical drill, and skill in solving difficulties, for the *élan* toward knowledge; or by putting the intellect of the student to sleep in ready-made formulas, which he accepts and memorizes without engaging his own self in the grasping of what they supposedly convey to him. Genuine contemplative or truth-grasping learning fails in its very nature if it does not develop in the youth both critical activity and a kind of thirst and anguish whose reward will be the very joy of perceiving truth.

But, in this section on the educational process, the point I should like especially to consider is the relationship between adults and youth.

In the educational task, adult people do not have to impose coercion on children, with a kind of paternalism or rather imperialism

5. Hélène Lubienska de Lenval, "La Contemplation Silencieuse chez les Enfants," *Nova et Vetera* (Fribourg, Switzerland), July-September, 1951.

of the grown-ups, in order to impress their own image upon the child as upon a bit of clay. But what this service requires from them is, first, love and, then, authority—I mean genuine authority, not arbitrary power—intellectual authority to teach and moral authority to be respected and listened to. For the child is entitled to expect from them what he needs: to be positively guided and to learn what he is ignorant of.

What do adults essentially owe to youth in the educational task? First of all, what corresponds to the primary aim of education, that is, both truth to be known at the various degrees of the scale of knowledge and the capacity to think and make a personal judgment, to be developed, equipped, and firmly established; then, what corresponds to the secondary aims of education, especially the heritage of a given culture, to be conveyed.

Now, if we consider the way in which adults perform their task with respect to youth, in practice and actual existence, it seems that more often than not children are victims of the grown-ups rather than the beneficiaries of their good services. Hence, progressive education might be described as expressing a kind of revolt against the reign of adults. This would have been all for the good if youth had not been made, once again, a victim, this time not of the selfish domination of the world of the grown-ups, but of the illusions and irresponsibility of well-intentioned adults, who rightly insist on the freedom of the child—but what kind of freedom? Too often freedom from any rule or freedom to do as the child pleases, instead of genuine freedom for the child to develop as a man and genuine progress toward autonomy.

A twofold crucial problem arises when the educational task has to be performed in a changing world of knowledge and a changing world of culture and social conditions.

As concerns the social changes in the contemporary world, teachers have neither to make the school into a stronghold of the established order nor to make it into a weapon to change society. The dilemma could not be solved if the primary aim and function of education were defined in relation to society and social work. In reality they are defined in relation to intelligence. Then the dilemma is transcended because teachers must be concerned, above all, with helping minds to become articulate, free, and autonomous. It

is neither for conservative nor for revolutionary purposes but for the general purpose of teaching how to think, that they have to foster in the pupils the principles of the democratic charter.

As concerns our changing world of knowledge, the answer is simple in itself: *vetera novis augere*; all new gains and discoveries should be used, not to shatter and reject what has been acquired by the past, but to augment it: a work of integration, not of destruction. This, however, is easier said than done. For it presupposes that the mind of the adults, especially the teachers, is not itself in a state of division and anarchy, and that the adults are in possession of what they have to communicate, namely, wisdom and integrated knowledge. Not to speak of exceptionally remarkable achievements in interdepartmental co-operation like the "Committee on Social Thought" in the University of Chicago, one possible remedy for the lack of integration in the minds of teachers themselves would be, in my opinion, the development, on a large scale, of study clubs and seminars in which teachers belonging to various disciplines and departments would meet together, on a voluntary basis, and discuss basic problems which are relevant to the unity of knowledge and which have an impact on a variety of fields, as well as controversial issues that are raised by contemporary research and creative activity. I am convinced that it would thus be possible for fresh and quickening blood to circulate in the campuses. But such initiative could obviously start and succeed only if teachers had the necessary free time, that is to say, if they were not faced with overburdened schedules and a much too heavy number of teaching hours—one of the most serious impediments to the progress of the present educational system. It is preposterous to ask people who lead an enslaved life to perform a task of liberation, which the educational task is by essence.

### *Education and the Individual*

#### CONCERNING PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLES

Among the many questions which can be discussed under this heading, the one I shall point out is the essential question: Who is the "principal agent" in the educational process?

The teacher exercises a real causal power on the mind of the pupil, but in the manner in which a doctor acts to heal his patient: by assisting nature and co-operating with it. Education, like medi-



cine, is *ars co-operativa naturae*. The contention of Thomist philosophy is that in both cases nature (the vital energies of nature in the patient, the intellectual energies of nature in the pupil) is the principal agent, on whose own activity the process primarily depends. The *principal agent* in the educational process is not the teacher, but the student.<sup>6</sup>

#### CONCERNING PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This basic truth was forgotten or disregarded by the advocates of education by the rod. Here we have the fundamental vice of the "Middletown" conception of the school. Into whatever exaggeration it may have fallen, progressive education has had the merit of putting the forgotten truth in question in the foreground. The "principal agent" is not able to give himself what he does not have. He would lead himself astray if he acted at random. He must be taught and guided: But the main thing in this teaching process is that his natural and spontaneous activity be always respected and his power of insight and judgment always fostered, so that at each step he may master the subject matter in which he is instructed. In this perspective, what matters most is to develop in the child the "intuitivity" of the mind and its spiritual discriminating and creative energies. The educational venture is a ceaseless appeal to intelligence and free will in the young person.

The most precious gift in an educator is a sort of sacred and loving attention to the child's mysterious identity, which is a hidden thing that no techniques can reach. Encouragement is as fundamentally necessary as humiliation is harmful. But what must be specially stressed is the fact that the teacher has to center the acquisition of knowledge and solid formation of the mind on the freeing of the learner's intuitive power.

The liberation of which I am speaking depends essentially, moreover, on the free adhesion of the mind to the objective reality to be seen:

Let us never deceive or rebuke the thirst for seeing in youth's intelligence! The freeing of the intuitive power is achieved in the soul through the object grasped, the intelligible grasping toward which this power

6. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Sum. theol.*, I, q. 117, a. 1; *Contra Gent.*, Bk. II, chap. lxxv; *De Verit.*, q. 11, a. 1.

naturally tends. The germ of insight starts within a preconscious intellectual cloud, arising from experience, imagination, and a kind of spiritual feeling, but it is from the outset a tending toward an object to be grasped. And to the extent that this tendency is set free and the intellect becomes accustomed to grasping, seeing, expressing the objects toward which it tends, to that very extent its intuitive power is liberated and strengthened.<sup>7</sup>

In asking a youth to read a book, let us get him to undertake a real spiritual adventure and meet and struggle with the internal world of a given man, instead of glancing over a collection of bits of thought and dead opinions, looked upon from without and with sheer indifference, according to the horrible custom of so many victims of what they call "being informed." Perhaps with such methods the curriculum will lose a little in scope, which will be all to the good.<sup>8</sup>

### *School and Society*

#### THE TEACHING OF THE DEMOCRATIC CHARTER

*Concerning Philosophical Principles.* A society of free men implies agreement between minds and wills on the bases of life in common. There are, thus, a certain number of tenets—about the dignity of the human person, human rights, human equality, freedom, justice, and law—on which democracy presupposes common consent and which constitute what may be called the democratic charter. Without a general, firm, and reasoned-out conviction concerning such tenets, democracy cannot survive.

But these basic tenets and this charter of freedom are of a strictly *practical* character—at the point of convergence of the theoretical approaches peculiar to the various, even opposite, schools of thought which are rooted in the history of modern nations. No common assent can be required by society regarding the *theoretical justifications*, the conceptions of the world and of life, the philosophical or religious creeds which found, or claim to found, the practical tenets of the democratic charter. A genuine democracy cannot impose on its citizens or demand from them, as a condition for their belonging to the city, any philosophic or any religious creed.

7. Jacques Maritain, *Education at the Crossroads*, p. 44. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1943.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

As a result, as I have pointed out elsewhere:

The body politic has the right and the duty to promote among its citizens, mainly through education, the human and temporal—and essentially practical—creed on which depend national communion and civil peace. It has no right, as a merely temporal or secular body, to impose on the citizens or to demand from them a rule of faith or a conformism of reason, a philosophical or religious creed which would present itself as the only possible justification of the practical charter through which the people's common secular faith expresses itself. The important thing for the body politic is that the democratic sense be in fact kept alive by the adherence of minds, however diverse, to this moral charter. The ways and the justifications by means of which this common adherence is brought about pertain to the freedom of minds and consciences.<sup>9</sup>

Since education (one of the essential, though secondary, aims of which is to prepare for life in society and good citizenship) is obviously the primary means to foster common conviction in the democratic charter, a particularly serious and difficult problem arises at this point for educational philosophy.

On the one hand, the educational system has a duty to see to the teaching of the charter of freedom. Yet it can do this only in the name of the common assent through which the charter in question is held true by the people. And thus—since in actual fact the body politic is divided in its fundamental theoretical conceptions, and since the democratic state cannot impose any philosophical or religious creed—the educational system, in seeing to the teaching of the common charter, can and must cling only to the common practical recognition of the merely practical tenets upon which the people have agreed to live together, despite the diversity or the opposition between their spiritual traditions and schools of thought.

On the other hand, there is no belief except in what is held to be intrinsically established in truth nor any assent of the intellect without a theoretical foundation and justification. Thus, if the educational system is to perform its duty and inculcate the democratic charter in a really efficacious way, it cannot help resorting to the philosophical or religious traditions and schools of thought which are spontaneously at work in the consciousness of the nation and which have contributed historically to its formation.

9. Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State*, pp. 111–12. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951.

Adherence to one or another of those schools of thought rests with the freedom of each person. But it would be sheer illusion to think that the democratic charter could be efficiently taught if it were separated from the roots that give it consistency and vigor in the mind of youth, and if it were reduced to a mere series of abstract formulas—bookish, bloodless, and cut off from life. Those who teach the democratic charter must stake on it their personal convictions, their consciences, and the depth of their moral lives. They must, therefore, explain and justify its articles in the light of the philosophical or religious faith to which they cling and which quickens their belief in it.

Now, if every teacher does thus put all his philosophical or religious convictions, his personal faith, and his soul, into the effort to confirm and vivify the moral charter of democracy, then it is clear that such teaching demands a certain spontaneous adaptation between the one who gives and the one who receives, between the aspiration animating the teacher and the basic conceptions that the student holds from his home circle and his social milieu and that his family feels the duty of fostering and developing in him.<sup>10</sup>

The conclusion is obvious. For the very sake of providing unity in the adherence to the democratic charter, a sound pluralism must obtain in the means. Inner differentiations must come into force in the structure of the educational system, which must admit within itself pluralistic patterns enabling teachers to put their entire convictions and most personal inspiration in their teaching of the democratic charter.

*Concerning Practical Application with Respect to the Teaching of the Democratic Charter.* After having put forward general views quite akin to those I just mentioned, Mahan states:

I think we can set down one principle as basic: that public schools must recognize and acknowledge the various influences, both religious and areligious, which inspired our democratic ideal. . . . That principle is very broad and gives rise to seemingly insurmountable problems. How are we going to insure unbiased exposition of influence? There are several ways—none of them very practical.<sup>11</sup>

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–22.

11. Thomas W. Mahan, "The Problem of a Democratic Philosophy of Education," *School and Society*, LXXVI (September 7, 1952), 193–96.

I am ready to admit that no perfectly satisfactory solution can be found. In such a complex matter, some inherent difficulty or questionable aspect may always be pointed out. Nevertheless I keep on believing that prudential wisdom can invent and apply solutions which—though more or less imperfect in some respect—will prove to be the best possible under given circumstances.

I would like, first, to remark that any teacher entrusted with the teaching of the democratic charter should possess two complementary qualities: On the one hand, he should be animated, as we have seen, by deep personal convictions, in which his whole philosophy of life is engaged—for no teaching deprived of conviction can engender conviction; on the other hand, he should have such intellectual openness and generosity as to foster a sense of fellowship with respect to those who justify the democratic creed through other theoretical approaches—this is required, as we have seen, by the very nature of the thing taught. And this, moreover, is of a nature to lessen to some extent the difficulty of our problem, when it comes to minorities which do not share in the philosophical or religious outlook of the teacher, and which, of course, must not be discriminated against.

Now there are, in my opinion as regards practical application, three possible ways which might be submitted for consideration.

In the first place, we might imagine that when the schools are located in communities each one of which is homogeneous as to its spiritual traditions, the teachers who are in charge of the democratic charter could be allotted such or such a particular area, according to their own wishes as well as to the moral geography of the local communities, so that their own personal religious or philosophical convictions would roughly correspond to those which prevail in the social environment.

In the second place, when the local communities in which schools are located are heterogeneous as to their spiritual traditions, the teaching of the democratic charter might be divided among a few different teachers whose respective personal outlooks correspond in broad outline to the main religious or philosophical traditions represented in the student population.

In the third place, instead of having the democratic charter taught as a special part of the curriculum, we might have it embodied in

a new discipline which would be introduced into the curriculum, and which, being merely historical, would permit the teacher, while giving a free rein to his own personal inspiration, to put less emphasis on the theoretical principles which justify for him the secular democratic faith. The new discipline in question would bring together, in the basic framework of national history and history of civilization, matters pertaining to the humanities, human sciences, social philosophy, and philosophy of law, all these to be centered on the development and significance of the great ideas comprised in the common charter. Thus, this charter would be taught in a concrete and comprehensive manner, in the light of the great poets, thinkers, and heroes of mankind, of our knowledge of man, and of the historical life of the nation.

Would the three ways I just mentioned answer all the requirements of the practical issue under discussion? They are, it seems to me, at least worthy of being tentatively tried and tested. They are the only ways I am able to conceive of, but I hope that other and better ones can be proposed. In any case the fact remains that the teaching of the democratic charter is, today, one of the chief obligations of education and no practical solution is possible except along the lines of some pluralistic arrangement.

Americans may disagree as to why American democracy is right, but they must agree that there are reasons why it is right. I do not know how public education can meet the demand upon it to insure that conviction. I do know that, if the public schools are allowed to swallow the philosophy of scientific humanism because of its purported neutrality, they will fail to meet their obligations to further the common good.<sup>12</sup>

*Concerning Practical Application with Respect to School Life.* From the point of view of practical application, there are other considerations whose relevance should be stressed as regards the preparation of the youth for a real understanding of the democratic way of life. These considerations no longer have to do with the teaching, they have rather to do with the very life of the school and the college.

There, in the life of the school and the college, the beginnings of the habits and virtues of freedom and responsibility should take place in actual exercise. In other words, the students should not be

12. Thomas W. Mahan, *loc. cit.*, p. 196.

a merely receptive element in the life of that kind of republic which is the school or the college. They should, to some extent, actively participate in it. The best way for this would obtain, in my opinion, if they were freely organized in teams, responsible for the discipline of their members and their progress in work.

Such an experiment was made in some places with surprisingly good results. The teams are formed by the students themselves, without any interference from school authorities; they elect their own captains; they have regular meetings—which no teacher attends—in which they examine and discuss how the group behaves and the questions with which it is confronted. Their captains, on the other hand, as representatives of each team, have regular contacts with the school authorities, to whom they convey the suggestions, experiences, and problems of the group. So the students are actually interested in the organization of studies, the general discipline, the “political life” of the school or the college, and they can play a sort of consultative part in the activity of the educational republic.

With such methods, the youth become concretely aware of, and attached to, the democratic way of life, while a sense of dignity and self discipline, collective autonomy, and collective honor develops in them. In a manner adapted to the age and capacity of students, schools and universities should be laboratories in the responsibilities of freedom and the qualities of the mind proper to democratic citizenship. It can hardly be stated that no improvement is needed in this respect. Displays of oratory, making students proud of their skill in airing opinions, and intoxicated with words, seem to me to be only illusory compensations for the lack I just alluded to.

#### LIBERAL EDUCATION FOR ALL

*Concerning Philosophical Principles.* Education directed toward wisdom, centered on the humanities, aiming to develop in people the capacity to think correctly and to enjoy truth and beauty, is education for freedom, or liberal education. Whatever his particular vocation may be, and whatever special training his vocation may require, every human being is entitled to receive such a properly human and humanistic education.

Liberal education was restricted in the past to the children of the upper classes. This very fact reacted on the way in which it was itself conceived. Liberal education for all obliges us, I believe, to undertake a double reconsideration.

In the first place, a serious recasting of the very concept of the humanities and the liberal arts has been made necessary by the development of human knowledge in modern centuries. The notion of the humanistic disciplines and the field of liberal arts must be enlarged so as to comprise physics and the natural sciences, the history of sciences, anthropology and the other human sciences, with the history of cultures and civilizations, even technology (in so far as the activity of the spirit is involved), and the history of manual work and the arts, both mechanical and fine arts.

I would like to insist, in particular, that physics and the natural sciences must be considered one of the chief branches of the liberal arts. They are mainly concerned with the mathematical reading of natural phenomena, and they insure in this way the domination of the human spirit over the world of matter, not in terms of ontological causes but rather in terms of number and measurement. Thus they appear, so to speak, as a final realization of the Pythagorean and Platonist trends of thought in the very field of that world of *experience* and *becoming* which Plato looked upon as a shadow on the wall of the cave. Physics and the natural sciences, if they are taught not only for the sake of practical applications but essentially for the sake of knowledge, provide man with a vision of the universe and a sense of the sacred, exacting, unbending objectivity of the humblest truth, which play an essential part in the liberation of the mind and in liberal education. Physics, like mathematics, if it is viewed in the creative power from which great discoveries proceed, is close to poetry. If it were taught as it demands to be, in the light of the spiritual workings of man, it should be revered as a liberal art of the first rank and an integral part of the humanities.

As to the human sciences, the positivistic bias with which, as a rule, they are cultivated today makes their humanistic value rather questionable indeed. Yet this is an abnormal situation, for which they themselves are not responsible. It would be a great misfortune, and a blunder, to exclude from the realm of the humanities the sciences of man, even though developed at the level of empiriological



knowledge. The problem for them, as for physics and the other sciences of phenomena, is to be set free, in the minds of scientists, from the pseudophilosophical prejudices which have preyed upon them as parasites. They should be taught, in so far as they are a part of a program in the humanities, from a philosophical point of view, with reference to the particular epistemological approach they involve, and with a constant concern, either for the understanding of human nature and the development of its potentialities, or for the understanding of the ways in which the human mind functions.

We have also to stress the crucial importance of the history of sciences with respect to humanistic education. In the perspective of the humanities, the genesis of science in the human mind and its progress, adventures, and vicissitudes in the course of history have as much illuminating power as the results that science attains and the changing disclosures on the universe of nature that it offers us in various periods of its development. Knowledge of the succession of scientific theories, of the inner logic, and also of the part of chance and contingency, that can be observed in their evolution, and of the actual ways through which scientific imagination proceeds from discovery to discovery can alone give the student a real understanding of scientific truth and its authentic range. The history of sciences is the genuine instrument through which physical sciences can be integrated in the humanities and their humanistic value brought out in full light.

In the second place, it has become indispensable to give full recognition to the concept of basic liberal education and to the typical requirements it involves. I have just indicated the necessary *broadening* of the *matters* comprised within the scope of the liberal arts and the humanities. What I am now emphasizing is the necessary *restriction* of the burden imposed on the student, and of the curriculum, as concerns the very *ways and perspective* in which the matters in question have to be taught.

Let us refer to the considerations laid down in a previous section on natural intelligence and basic liberal education.<sup>13</sup> On the one hand, the objective of basic liberal education is not the acquisition of science itself or art itself, along with the intellectual virtues in-

13. See *supra*, pp. 61-62.

volved, but rather the grasp of their *meaning* and the comprehension of the truth and beauty they yield. We grasp the meaning of a science or an art when we understand its object, nature, and scope, and the particular species of truth or beauty it discloses to us. The objective of basic liberal education is to see to it that the young person grasps this truth or beauty through the natural powers and gifts of his mind and the natural intuitive energy of his reason backed up by his whole sensuous, imaginative, and emotional dynamism.

On the other hand, as concerns the content of knowledge, of the *things* that the young person has to learn, this content is to be determined by the very requirements of the grasp in question. Many things which were taught in the past in liberal education are useless; many things which were not taught in the past in liberal education are necessary in this regard. But in any case, the subjects and methods which are proper to graduate studies have no place at this level. In short, the guiding principle is less factual information and more intellectual enjoyment. The teaching should be concentrated on awakening the minds to a few basic intuitions or intellectual perceptions in each particular discipline, through which what is essentially illuminating as to the truth of things learned is definitely and unshakably possessed. The result would be both a rise in quality of the teaching received and an alleviation of the material burden imposed by the curriculum.

*Concerning Practical Application.* If all the preceding remarks are true, we see that the distinction between basic liberal education and higher learning or graduate studies should be emphasized: because the first deals with a world of knowledge appropriate to natural intelligence, the second with a world of knowledge appropriate to intellectual virtues.

When he enters this world of knowledge proper to higher learning, or the world of technical and professional studies, or the world of practical activity in a given job—the youth will specialize in a particular field. At the same time he will have the opportunity, either by means of the university or the technological institutions, or by his own initiative, to pursue and improve his humanistic education. This would be simply impossible if he were not previously equipped with an adequate basic liberal education.

Basic liberal education should cover both high school and college. During high-school years, the mode of teaching would be adapted to the freshness and spontaneous curiosity of budding reason, stirred and nourished by the life of the imagination. When it comes to college years, we would have to do with natural intelligence in a state of growth, with its full natural aspirations to universal knowledge—and, at the same time, with its normal tendency to develop some more perfect *habitus* or disposition relating to preparation for a particular field of activity. So the college would have to insure both basic liberal education in its final stages and the development of a particular state of capacity. The best arrangement for this purpose would be to have the college divided into a number of fields of concentration or fields of primary interest, each one represented by a given school (or “*institut*,” in the French sense of this word). In effect, this would be to have the college divided into a number of *schools of oriented humanities*, all of which would be dedicated to basic liberal education, but each of which would be concerned with preparatory study in a particular field of activity, thus dealing with the beginnings and first development of a given intellectual virtue or a given intellectual skill. And basic liberal education rather than this preparatory study would be the primary aim. But precisely in order to make basic liberal education fully efficacious, the manner in which it would be given, and the teaching organized, would take into consideration the particular intellectual virtue, or the particular intellectual skill, to be developed in the future scientist or businessman, artist, doctor, newspaperman, teacher, lawyer, or specialist in government.

I mean that all the students would have to attend courses in all the matters of the curriculum in basic liberal education; but, on the one hand, the apportionment of the hours given to certain of these courses might be different for the students in the various schools of oriented humanities; and, on the other hand, special courses in each of these schools would enlighten the student on the vital relationship between the particular discipline being taught and the chief disciplines of the common curriculum.

Thus, the essential hierarchy of values inherent in liberal education would be preserved, with the main emphasis, as to the disciplines, on philosophy; and, as to the ways and methods, on the

reading of great books. But the practical arrangement of the curriculum would be attuned, in the manner I just indicated, to what will be later on, in actual fact, the principal activity of the person who is now a student. In this way it would be easier to insure the unity and integration of the teaching, especially if the teachers of each school of oriented humanities co-operated in a close and constant manner so as to elaborate and enforce a common educational policy. And the students would receive a kind of preprofessional training (unavoidable as it is in actual existence) which, instead of impairing liberal education and worming its way into it like a parasite, would serve to make the young person more vitally interested in liberal education and more deeply penetrated by it.

The notion of basic liberal education, with the kind of recasting of the list of liberal arts and the method of teaching the humanities we have considered, is of a nature, it seems to me, to give practical and existential value to the concept of *liberal education for all*. On the one hand, basic liberal education, dealing only with the sphere of knowledge and the educational approach appropriate to natural intelligence and respecting the need of natural intelligence for unity and integration, avoids any burden of pseudoscience to be imposed on the student and feeds on the spontaneous, natural interests of his mind. On the other hand, given the broadening of the field of liberal arts and humanities, on the necessity of which I have laid stress, liberal education would cease being considered an almost exclusively literary education. Since the humanities in our age of culture require articulate knowledge of the achievements of the human mind in science as well as in literature and art, and since it is normal to attune, during college years, the common teaching of the humanities, essential for all, to a particular preparatory training diversified according to the various prospective vocations of the students, basic liberal education is adapted to all the real needs which the liberal education of the past was reproached with being unable to satisfy.

Basic liberal education does not look upon students as future professors or specialists in all the branches of knowledge and the liberal arts taught in the curriculum. It does not look upon them as future gentlemen or members of the privileged class. It looks upon them as future citizens, who must act as free men and who are able to make sound and independent judgments in new and changing

situations, either with respect to the body politic or to their own particular task. It is also to be expected that these future citizens would educate their children and discuss with them competently the matters taught in school. Moreover, it is assumed that they would dedicate their own leisure time to those activities of rest through which man enjoys the common heritage of knowledge and beauty, or those activities of superabundance through which he helps his fellow-men with generosity.

### *School and Religion*

#### MORAL EDUCATION AND RELIGION

*Concerning Philosophical Principles.* Formation in moral life and virtues is an essential part, indeed the most important part, of the primary aim of education in the broad sense of the word. School and college education is not equipped to secure it in a full and complete manner; yet it is bound to contribute positively and efficaciously to the moral formation of the youth.

This depends a great deal on the general inspiration of the teaching, especially on the way in which study in the humanities and the reading of the works of great poets and writers convey to young people the treasure of moral ideas and moral experience of mankind. Yet the assistance of religious education is basically needed. It is a fact that we live in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. And, over and above all, it is a fundamental human datum that moral life, in one way or another, sometimes unconsciously, is linked with religious belief and experience. If the existence of the One who is the Absolute Being and the Absolute Good is not recognized and believed in, no certitude in the unconditional and obligatory value of moral law and ethical standards can be validly established and efficaciously adhered to.

It is, therefore, an obligation for the school and the college, not only to enlighten students on moral matters, but also to allow them to receive full religious education.

*Concerning Practical Application.* The practical problem has to do with secular (nondenominational) schools and universities and with state institutions. It might be said that the lay character of the curriculum or the matters of learning (what is called in French *instruction*, in contradistinction to *éducation*) in the modern school

system corresponds to the lay character of the modern state. This does not prevent religious inspiration, if the teachers have any, in the teaching of these matters any more than it prevents religious inspiration in civil life. It only prevents secular institutions from dogmatizing in religious matters and taking a stand in favor of any particular religious denomination.

Sharp distinction between church and state does not mean that the church and the state must live in ignorance of and isolation from each other. On the contrary, they have to co-operate. But this distinction means that the proper domain of the state is lay or secular and that no privileged treatment, contrary to the principle of the equality of all before the law, can be given by the state to the citizens of any given creed, their activities, or their institutions.

Accordingly, the solution, in the educational sphere, is to be sought in a sound application of the pluralist principle. Religious training should be made available to the student population—not in a compulsory way, but on a voluntary basis—in accordance with the wishes of the students and their parents, and given by representatives of the various faiths.

Shall I run counter to the conventions of contemporary education if I add that this religious training should not only be received from the family and the church community, independently of the life of the school, but should also be connected with this very life as an integral part thereof? In any case, this is my own conviction. If we are firmly and positively persuaded that religion is but error and superstition, this conviction will of course appear to us as nonsense; yet, in such a case we have no right to impose our own areligious or irreligious philosophy on our fellow-citizens; we do have the right to shun religious training for our own children and to have them attend courses in good manners and civic morality or enjoy scientific entertainment, while the other students listen to their respective teachers in religion. But if we do not hold religion to be error and superstition, I do not see how we can assume that God is less entitled to have His place in the school than the electron or Professor Bertrand Russell.

All serious-minded observers agree that the split between religion and life is the root of spiritual disorder from which we suffer today. It is preposterous to make this split in childhood and to per-

petuate it in the educational system by cutting off religious training from the training proper to schools and colleges. Young people are aware of the fact that school and college education is in charge of furnishing their minds with each and every knowledge required by the realities of life. If religious knowledge is disconnected from this education, it is normal to deem it something separate and additional, either superfluous or merely related to private sentimentality. It is the very right of the child and the youth to be equipped through his formal education with religious knowledge as well as with any knowledge which plays an essential part in the life of man.

Now if this solution, which, to my mind, is the normal one, is not accepted, secular schools and colleges should at least co-operate with the parents in giving the students who desire it appropriate free time and full facilities to be instructed in religious knowledge outside the school or the college, and to participate in extracurricular religious groups and activities. Those who are not interested in religion would use for cultural activities of their choice the free time thus granted to their fellow students apart from curricular obligations.

#### THE TEACHING OF THEOLOGY

The moral aspect, furthermore, is far from being the only one to be considered in the issue we are discussing. Truth to be known about God and the relation of man to God matters more to religious faith than human actions to be regulated. In other words, it is not only in the moral perspective but also, and first of all, in the intellectual perspective and from the point of view of the full growth of the intellect that the issue must be examined. Then we are dealing with the interests of the intellect, that is to say, with what is the most immediate concern of school and college education. At this point it is relevant for me to state my views in terms of *theology* rather than of *religion*. For theology means knowledge *in the state of science*—a knowledge which is both rooted in revealed data and rationally developed, logically and systematically articulated. According to Thomas Aquinas, theology is both speculative and practical (or moral), but primarily speculative, and more speculative than practical. Anyone who believes in a divine revelation can hardly fail to hold with him that theology, which gives us some under-

standing of the divine mystery, is the highest wisdom that man can acquire as adapted to the procedures of human reason. It is superior to philosophy, which it employs as an appropriate instrument of rational disquisition, and is inferior only to contemplative or mystical wisdom.

How could the college be justified in doing without this wisdom while claiming fully to prepare and equip the minds of youth? No knowledge fit to fortify the mind and enlarge its scope can be absent from a place where universal knowledge is taught. For the believer, theology and theological controversy convey to us matters which are in themselves of supreme worth. For the unbeliever, they convey to us what a number of his fellow-men, at each step of an age-long civilized tradition, have fed on as matters of supreme worth. There may be unbelievers and believers together in the student population and in the teaching body of a university. But the university itself, as a living institution, cannot help taking a stand, and must take a stand, with respect to the existence of God. An atheist university, in which there is no teaching in theology, has intellectual consistency. A university which is not atheist, and in which there is no teaching in theology, has no intellectual consistency. Newman was right in stating that, if a university professes its scientific duty to exclude theology from its curriculum, "such an Institution cannot be what it professes, if there be a God."

As a matter of fact, as I pointed out in a book from which I take the liberty of quoting here:

Theological problems and controversies have permeated the whole development of Western culture and civilization, and are still at work in its depths, in such a way that the one who would ignore them would be fundamentally unable to grasp his own time and the meaning of its internal conflicts. Thus impaired, he would be like a barbarous and disarmed child walking amidst the queer and incomprehensible trees, fountains, statues, gardens, ruins, and buildings still under construction, of the old park of civilization. The intellectual and political history of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the Reformation and the Counter Reformation, the internal state of British society after the Revolution in England, the achievements of the Pilgrim Fathers, the Rights of Man, and the further events in world history have their starting point in the great disputes on nature and grace of our classical age. Neither Dante nor Cervantes nor Rabelais nor Shakespeare nor John Donne nor William Blake,



nor even Oscar Wilde or D. H. Lawrence, nor Giotto nor Michelangelo nor El Greco nor Zurbaran, nor Pascal nor Rousseau, nor Madison nor Jefferson nor Edgar Allan Poe nor Baudelaire, nor Goethe nor Nietzsche nor even Karl Marx, nor Tolstoy nor Dostoevski is actually understandable without a serious theological background. Modern philosophy itself, from Descartes to Hegel, remains enigmatic without that, for in actual fact philosophy has burdened itself all through modern times with problems and anxieties taken over from theology, so that the cultural advent of a philosophy purely philosophical is still to be waited for. In the cultural life of the Middle Ages philosophy was subservient to theology or rather wrapped up in it; in that of modern times it was but secularized theology. Thus . . . liberal education cannot complete its task without the knowledge of the specific realm and the concerns of theological wisdom.<sup>14</sup>

The teaching of the latter should, moreover, be given in a quite different way from that appropriate to religious seminaries and be adapted to the intellectual needs of laymen; its aim should not be to form a priest, a minister, or a rabbi, but to enlighten students of secular matters about the great doctrines and perspectives of theological wisdom. Such teaching would not be concerned with the detailed apparatus of historical authorities, but it would rather lay stress on the intrinsic rational consistency of doctrines and the basic insights on which they depend. It would be free from any preoccupation with merely technical questions or dead quarrels and closely connected with the problems of contemporary science and culture. Studies in comparative religion would be included in it.

As far as practical application is concerned, it presents no difficulties for denominational colleges.<sup>15</sup> With regard to nondenominational colleges, the practical solution, here again, would depend on the recognition of the pluralist principle in such matters. "Theological teaching would be given, according to the diversity of creeds, by professors belonging to the main religious denominations, each one addressing the students of his own denomination. And of course, those students who nurture a bias against theology would be re-

14. *Education at the Crossroads*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

15. Cf. Gerald B. Phelan's indisputable statement on "Theology in the Curriculum of Catholic Colleges and Universities," in *Man and Secularism*, pp. 128-40. New York: National Catholic Alumni Association, 1940.

leased from attending these courses and allowed to remain incomplete in wisdom at their own pleasure."<sup>16</sup>

#### THE INTEGRITY OF NATURAL REASON

A last observation must be made. Given the present situation of culture, the primary service that religion may receive from the school is that the school should restore in students the integrity of reason, of natural reason. As long as the teaching as a whole, in the high school as in the college, is permeated with a general philosophy which relies only on sense experience and facts and figures, disintegrates reason and denies its proper perceptive power and the most valuable certainties of which the human intellect is capable—and the first of which is the rational knowledge of God's existence; as long as chaotic information is cultivated in the place of integrated knowledge and spiritual unity, the very soil and natural background on which religious convictions may thrive in youth will remain rough and barren.

Now, is the work of reason itself capable of taking on its full natural dimensions without the superior balance created in common consciousness by religious faith and inspiration? Is philosophy capable, in actual existence, of reaching its own full rational integrity without the inner promptings and reinforcements it receives from theological knowledge? That's a major question, which I am only mentioning here. If we answer it in the affirmative, we have to say that human civilization, and its healing, depend on a complexity of causes which, as Aristotle put it, "cause one another." *Causae ad invicem sunt causae*.

In any case it would be nonsense to demand from teachers that they should be wiser than the general culture of their time and its great representatives, and that they should make up for the failure of the latter in doing the constructive work that mankind expected from them.

This means that the most crucial problem with which our educational system is confronted is not a problem of education, but of civilization.

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16. *Education at the Crossroads*, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

mation or inspiration or because I found in certain of them interesting and challenging views quite opposed to mine. These writings deal, as a rule, with matters which are discussed in this chapter as a whole, and it would be arbitrary to assign some of them to a particular section, some to another. That is why I have preferred to group them in a single bibliography.

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## CHAPTER IV

### *A Liberal Christian Idealist Philosophy of Education\**

THEODORE M. GREENE

#### *Basic Orientation*

##### POTENTIAL VALUE OF THIS SYMPOSIUM

I welcome this opportunity to participate in a symposium focused upon the educational implications of several contrasting philosophical points of view. The school, like all other basic institutions in our society, inevitably develops its own traditions and distinctive inertias. These, in turn, tend to generate in all who are concerned with the educational process—in parents, alumni, and citizens at large no less than in school administrators, teachers, and pupils—the complacent acceptance of “business as usual,” that is, of currently accepted educational ideologies and practices. This general complacency does not, of course, preclude recurrent discontent and criticism of academic procedures, both from within and from without the school system. Lively administrators are eager to improve the schools over which they preside; imaginative teachers are aware of personal and corporate failures and do what they can to improve their own teaching and to strengthen the school curriculum; interested parents and taxpayers contribute to the general ferment with criticisms and suggestions. Yet all such efforts tend to be superficial and peripheral, and the changes which ensue are usually trivial—a tinkering with details. What is needed, now as always, but especially now in these times of crisis, is a *radical* re-examination and reassessment of our entire educational structure, its ultimate objectives, its fundamental presuppositions, its basic procedures—all this in the existential context of our contemporary American society and of the total world situation and, no less urgently, in the still wider context of our best contemporary understanding of human nature and the universe to

\* Educational Consultant: Professor Donald Butler, Princeton University.

which we belong. Hence, the timeliness of this symposium, in which men of contrasting philosophical faiths attempt to restate their most ultimate beliefs and to spell out the bearing of these beliefs upon educational planning.

This effort need not imply, I believe, a sweeping condemnation of all present educational theory and practice. Wholesale indictments like Scott Buchanan's in his recent *Essay in Politics* are, it seems to me, much too indiscriminate. He insists:

The truth is that neither our society nor its academic servants know what should be taught to the young. . . . Less and less good teaching and learning are being done, and . . . the effects of bad teaching and learning are becoming evident. The general public has reasonable doubts that the academic institutions are providing the education that the community needs for its survival. . . . There is no confidence that the members of the [academic] body can teach and learn what they ought to know, or that there is any general will to find out what that might be.<sup>1</sup>

I, for one, am not persuaded that less and less good teaching and learning are being done, though I do agree that the effects of bad teaching and learning are becoming increasingly evident. I also agree that the general public tends to lack confidence in its school system, though it is questionable as to whether this lack of confidence is greater, or more justified, than it was in the past. The charge that neither society nor its academic servants know what should be taught and the doubt as to whether teachers really want to learn what they ought to know and teach are certainly too all-embracing to be fair, yet true enough to be profoundly disconcerting. What we are actually confronted with is, of course, a mixture of good and bad teaching, of the will to learn as well as unjustified complacency, of widespread conservatism along with a good deal of honest search and responsible experimentation. But even this more tempered account of the contemporary scene in education indicates the urgent need for *more basic* thinking and planning, and this involves, of necessity, the resolute effort to get back to fundamentals with all the philosophical rigor we can muster. The value of this symposium will be proportionate to the contribution it can make in this direction.

1. Scott Buchanan, *Essay in Politics*, pp. 182-85. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953.

## PHILOSOPHICAL LABELS AND POINTS OF VIEW

I also concur, in principle, with the editorial policy of inviting philosophers of different persuasions to articulate their basic beliefs and then consider the practical implications of these beliefs in educational theory and practice. For philosophy, today even more than in some other historical periods, is many-voiced; these voices do tend to constitute a pattern of types; and the types selected for representation in this volume do, in fact, exist in our society. This approach, however, raises two difficulties which I feel to be serious enough to merit brief mention.

In the first place, different philosophical points of view, "schools," or positions are not mutually exclusive in all respects. On the contrary, all, of necessity, share *some* common presuppositions, and each finds itself in considerable agreement with one or more of its presumptive rivals. More significant, then, than any specifiable type or types of philosophy is the larger pattern of partly contrasting, partly overlapping, *emphases and trends* of contemporary belief on ultimate matters. Secondly, no philosopher worthy of the name is a pure exemplification of any school or type, the wholly appropriate recipient of any handy philosophical label. He may prefer, and merit, some one label in reference to any other presently available, but if he actually functions as a philosopher he is devoting his life to the development and articulation of *his own* more or less distinctive beliefs, even if these fall primarily, or even wholly, within the confines of a historical school or tradition.

I mention these two difficulties because they are germane to my own contribution to this volume. I was initially asked to represent "idealism" and I was tempted to accept this assignment because, as labels go, I did seem to find this label less uncongenial than most of those here selected for representation. Yet, note my immediate quandary. First of all, I would have had to dissociate myself completely from the "subjective" idealism exemplified in the earlier Berkeley. I believe in the "objective reality" of the physical world as completely as any "naturalist" or "realist." I am an "idealist," then, only in the sense that I am in *general* sympathy with the long tradition of "objective" idealism, from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle to Kant and the nineteenth- and twentieth-century "objective" idealists

in England, Europe, and America. I say "in general sympathy" partly because these idealists themselves differ in more or less important ways from one another, and partly because I am unable to accept *in toto* the views of any one, or any group, of them.

This, however, is only my first quarrel with the label of "idealist." For I am also a professing Christian in the Protestant tradition. This means that I believe in a God who, whatever else He may be, is a dynamic agent, a spiritual power of force, not to be equated with the most objective of values but rather to be conceived of as their ultimate ground and source. This belief is quite consistent with the characteristic idealist belief in "objective" values but quite incompatible with the equally characteristic idealist insistence on the ontological ultimacy and self-sufficiency of values and with their frequent disbelief in a dynamic God of righteousness and love. In short, I am not at all a typical "secular" objective idealist; I am, rather, a philosophically atypical Christian idealist.

These broad and loose distinctions call, of course, for much refinement, and I shall have something to add regarding them presently. Meanwhile, as an "idealist" I would in honesty have had to record, however sketchily, my unhappiness over being put, by implication, in such sharp opposition to the characteristic emphases and insights which are commonly associated with other current philosophical positions.

The most ambiguous of these (unless one hews to a very rigid historical line) is "realism." It is, indeed, a misfortune that this label was ever used to designate a distinctive philosophical position. For it implies that "nonrealists" are less interested in, or responsive to, "reality" than are "realists," i.e., that, in some vicious way, they are escapists or dreamers or bunglers. This is a charge which all philosophers must necessarily repudiate. For if philosophy is not an honest search for reality, what is it? And what is a philosophical doctrine or position if it is not some man's best account of what reality really is? In this basic sense we are all "realists," however divergent and however inadequate our accounts of reality may be. I would also have been embarrassed, however, by the fact that I find myself in basic agreement with some of the fundamental tenets of what is today called "realism." Indeed, I must radically dissociate myself only from those "realists" who decline to ascribe ultimate



reality to God and/or to basic values, though, here again, very much depends on how "God" and "values" are conceived of—in themselves, in their mutual relation, and in their relation to the world of nature.

I was no less unhappy over my presumptive "official" opposition to "existentialism" and "pragmatism." Once again, both labels are highly ambiguous, yet both are associated with basic insights and emphases which I would wish to accept wholeheartedly. No existentialist is more convinced than I am that reality, to be known, must be vividly and poignantly encountered in experience by man as a willing, acting being. And no pragmatist is more persuaded than I am that all our knowledge is human and therefore finite, that cognition is only part, though an essential part, of human life, and that all our thinking has consequences and makes a difference, for better or for worse. In short, I heartily subscribe to most of the generic *affirmations* of contemporary existentialism and pragmatism; I quarrel only with some of their negations, e.g., that reality is, for us humans at least, *reducible* to experience, or that truth and goodness are *reducible* without remainder to what "works."

My quarrel with "organicism" and "semanticism" is only partial. I too would wish to stress the "organic" structure of everything that is—of man himself, the realities which he encounters, and all his apprehensions of them. I am also deeply impressed by the crucial importance of the semantic problem; I am convinced that we can hope to make progress in our philosophical quest only if we do full justice to the nature of language, the variety of its types and possible uses, and the difficulty of determining the meaning of meaning. Yet, as a philosopher in the great European tradition, I would not wish to label myself either an "organicist" or a "semanticist" because both these labels seem to me to point to beliefs and problems which, however important, are, nonetheless, far less embracing than philosophy itself in all its sweep and depth.

Least ambiguous, perhaps, is my relation to "logical positivism," on the one hand, "Marxism" and "scholasticism" on the other. I am indeed most sympathetic to the positivistic attempt to achieve maximum clarity and precision, but I must reject completely its usual assumption, which I find very arbitrary, that our only experiences productive of reliable knowledge are sense experiences, that all value

experiences are *merely* emotive, and that the traditional metaphysical problems are merely pseudoproblems, unsusceptible of fruitful exploration. Here again, my quarrel is not with what is usefully asserted and attempted by the positivists but with what is so dogmatically and unjustifiably denied. My basic criticisms of Marxism and scholasticism, in turn, focus partly upon their distinctive affirmations and partly upon the spirit in which these affirmations are made. I must repudiate, root and branch, the ultimate dogma of Marxism, though I gladly acknowledge the shrewdness of many of its more specific interpretations of history and criticisms of our social order. I must also completely dissociate myself from the characteristic authoritarianism of scholasticism while accepting many, though by no means all, of its central philosophical and theological doctrines.

I have ventured upon this hasty listing of my own philosophical position *vis-a-vis* those of my fellow symposiasts merely to indicate, as briefly as possible, what I believe will prove to be the common predicament of all of us in this enterprise. The reader should be warned not to expect to find, in this volume, nine clear-cut, mutually exclusive, philosophical positions. He will actually find the necessarily sketchy reports of nine professional philosophers of more or less contrasting persuasions. The "texture" of the volume will be determined in large measure by our unique approaches to the problems to which we have addressed ourselves and also by the extent to which we succeed in exemplifying, in our own individual ways, older and more recent types of philosophical inquiry and belief. But the chief contribution of this yearbook to the educational problems of our times will, I suspect, derive from our conjoint articulation of larger emphases and tendencies which cut across these types of philosophical position or schools of thought—emphases and tendencies whose educational implications are quite certainly of great significance.

#### MY GENERAL POSITION

Before I proceed to list my basic philosophical presuppositions in some detail, let me attempt, in very general terms, to place myself, as it were, in the modern scene and thus explain the complicated label "Liberal Christian Idealist" which, with the committee's approval, I have finally selected for myself as a contributor to this

volume. The title is, I am well aware, a very awkward one, but no briefer title would be at all accurate in the present context. Each of the three terms signifies what I must regard as of crucial importance in my own thinking and pattern of beliefs.

I am a "liberal" in at least two complementary respects—in my radical opposition to *all* authoritarianisms, secular and religious, and in my faith in man's indefinite capacity for progress. I am an "idealist" in my belief in the reality, the discoverability, and the importance to man of objective values—of truth, beauty, and goodness as pure essences, and of truths, beauties, and concrete instances of goodness as finite embodiments of these absolute values. Finally, I am a Christian in my wholehearted acceptance of Christian theism and, in particular, of what I conceive to be the Biblical account of ultimate reality, human nature, and human destiny.

Each of these terms could, of course, be so defined as to become inconsistent with one or both of the other two. Liberalism is sometimes identified with a dogmatic and doctrinaire radicalism which is completely authoritarian and which quickly becomes reactionary. (Witness Russia!) The liberalism I profess is the very opposite of such radicalism. Philosophical idealism has, as I have already said, usually been interpreted in a predominantly secular context, and the values whose objectivity has been defended have been conceived of as wholly autonomous and ontologically self-sufficient. I would wish to claim for them a *restricted* autonomy, but I would ground them ultimately in that dynamic Being who is worshipped as God in the Christian faith. Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, tends powerfully toward an authoritarian orthodoxy. My own religious beliefs are, in fact, fairly orthodox, but I would wish to hold them with complete intellectual humility (along with great moral assurance), impressed as I am by the fallibility of all men, all human institutions, and all human knowledge. I am thus a liberal, not an authoritarian, Christian. (I am, therefore, damned as a heretic both by Catholics and by Fundamentalist Protestants.) I am a Christian who believes profoundly in the integrity and value of man's multiple searches, secular as well as religious, for truth, beauty, and goodness. (I am, therefore, viewed with suspicion as an eclectic, both by simon pure secular idealists and by Christians who have lost faith in man's essential goodness.) In short, I am a Christian humanist in my belief

in man's essential goodness *and* his inescapable sinfulness, his inevitable failure without God *and* his moral obligation to make his ultimate beliefs as reasonable and well informed as possible.

My position can also be described as mediating between two extremes—between religious and philosophical authoritarianism, on the one hand, and nihilistic skepticism, both secular and religious, on the other. With the authoritarians I believe in God, in His Self-revelation to men, and in objective values; but, in opposition to them, I repudiate all claims to infallible knowledge of God, or of His revelation, or of values. I am convinced (but *not* intellectually “certain”) that we can know these absolutes only partially and inadequately. Hence the intolerable arrogance of all dogmatism, if all human knowledge is, in fact, finite and relative. Here I come close to the skeptics, yet I differ from them profoundly when their skepticism is absolute (there is no God and there are no objective values to know; or, alternatively, even if God and/or values are real, they are wholly unknowable by men). Such radical skepticism seems to me to be completely self-contradictory and therefore suicidal. When Gorgias the Sophist declared, “There is nothing, and even if there were something we could not know it, and even if we could know it we could not communicate it to others,” he was telling his disciples (i.e., communicating) what he believed he knew about the “state of affairs” in which we find ourselves (i.e., what is); in short, he contradicted himself three times in a single sentence. This is what nihilistic relativists seem to me to be doing all the time in their expression of preferences in terms of better and worse (while denying that good and bad have any objective meaning) and in their expressions of ultimate belief when their complete relativism excludes the possibility of any ultimate. In contrast to them I am what might, I suppose, be called a “credal relativist,” that is, one who believes in God and objective values and in man's ability to know both in some degree but never absolutely—only finitely, from some historical and cultural and personal perspective that necessarily distorts what it reveals.

This very general description of “where I live” may become more intelligible as I proceed now to spell out some of my major philosophical presuppositions.

## MY BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

I must now attempt to state, as clearly and simply as possible, my own basic philosophical presuppositions, some of which I have already alluded to in my attempt to relate my position to those exemplified by my colleagues in this symposium.

1. My *first* presupposition, or basic assumption, is that man finds himself in a complex environment which he can in some measure know and to which he can more or less successfully adapt himself. This assumption falls halfway between radical skepticism, on the one hand, and all forms of absolutism or authoritarianism on the other. I believe that man *can* know something, but *not* everything; that he can know many things with increasing clarity and assurance, but that he can never, because he is incorrigibly finite, know *anything* with *complete* certainty and finality. "Now," to paraphrase St. Paul, "we *do* see, but only darkly," i.e., *partially*. I also believe that knowledge makes a difference, both practically, in our attempts to "control" reality, and normatively, in our attempts to live the good life and to be what we should be and act as we should act. Our knowledge may not, indeed, suffice to enable us to do what we want to do and be what we ought to be; but, surely, the more knowledge we have, the better—provided that such knowledge is real knowledge, so far as it goes, and provided that we use it wisely. I thus assume *the possibility, and the value, of knowing ourselves and our total environment and of thus relating ourselves to it.*

2. My *second* presupposition, stated in abstract, technical terms, is that ontology (the study of reality or being), epistemology (the study of knowledge and its criteria), and axiology (the study of values and evaluation) are complementary to one another and must be pursued in closest relation to one another. We cannot say anything about reality save in so far as we can know it; every ontology necessarily implies an epistemology. But, reversely, knowledge is, by definition, knowledge of reality—of something that is, in some sense and to at least some degree, real; every epistemology necessarily implies a knowable reality and therefore, at least implicitly, an ontology. Finally, since man is essentially a normative being, so constituted as to evaluate, explicitly or implicitly, everything he encounters and everything he thinks and does, his knowledge of

reality and the reality he encounters are inescapably permeated, through and through, with significance for him. He never evaluates in the abstract but only in the context of his real (or imagined) encounters with, and apprehensions of, the "world" in which he lives and to which he belongs; and he never encounters anything, and never thinks or acts, without these encounters, thoughts, and actions having in fact some significance for him. In short, I assume *man's essential dependence upon, and continual interplay with, his complex total environment, and the profound significance of this dependence and this interplay for his entire life and destiny.*

My next three presuppositions spell out, somewhat more fully, the ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects of the two presuppositions just stated.

3. My *third* presupposition concerns the nature, limits, and criteria of human knowledge.

- a) All our knowledge of reality is, I believe, based, directly or indirectly, upon encountering it in experience. Kant was right in principle when he insisted that "concepts without percepts are empty." We can never spin knowledge out of our heads. We always need primary "data," that is, primary encounters with that which has a character of its own.
- b) Kant was wrong, however, in believing that the only data capable of yielding valid empirical knowledge are sense data, and that man's only cognitively useful experiences are his sense experiences. (I am here taking Kant at his literal word and am ignoring his actual acceptance of moral insight as valid and reliable, because, in his writings, he so often distinguishes "knowledge" from "moral faith.") The great mistake of the positivists has been, I believe, to follow Kant's false lead on this point and to equate cognitively fruitful experience with sensory experience. Actually, as I see it, pure sensory experience is not only an abstraction, since it always occurs in a far richer and more varied experiential context; the sensory factors in experience are forever pointing beyond themselves and are thus mediating, nonsensory facets or dimensions of reality. Granted that we would not know each other as persons without sensory data—what we discover about one another's real nature far outruns this sensory evidence and is not itself sensory in character. Similarly, a blind man cannot see a picture and cannot, therefore, enjoy its beauty—but to a true lover of art a picture is far more than a mere pattern of lines and colors.

I would insist, therefore, that we should accept *all* human experiences as *potentially* revelatory, i.e., as encounters with some facet or aspect of the real. I deplore all *a priori* prejudicial exclusions of this

or that type of experience as "of course" noncognitive or as cognitively useless by definition.

- c) Primary experience alone, however, can never suffice either to give us knowledge or to validate our alleged insights into the real. Here again Kant was right in principle in insisting that "percepts without concepts," i.e., wholly uninterpreted data, are "blind." This is true, I believe, of all data, sensory and nonsensory alike; they *all* call for interpretation. Indeed, human knowledge *is* our more or less adequate interpretation of such data. I must, therefore, reject as invalid every form of intuitionism which conceives of an "intuition" as an immediate self-validating insight wholly innocent of interpretation, though I would accept, and indeed stress, the actual occurrence, and the very great possible significance, of intuitions defined as moments of unusually intense awareness in which much previous experience and reflection are brought to unusually clear and poignant focus.
- d) I follow Kant once again in conceiving of the entire cognitive process as a progressively more and more adequate *reconstruction* of reality as the latter presents itself to us in the greatest variety of primary encounters. I am, therefore, neither a naïve realist, who believes that we know reality as it really is by simply encountering it, nor a skeptical phenomenalist, who believes that we never do encounter reality itself and that all we can actually know are our own subjectively conditioned constructs. The middle position which I would defend asserts our actual encounter with reality *itself* and our ability to *reconstruct its* structure and texture more or less adequately, yet always within the limits of our contingent human capacities and finite limitations. I am, in this sense, a hopeful and confident "critical realist."
- e) No theory of knowledge is worthy of serious consideration which fails to offer some intelligible and useful criterion of knowledge. Mine is, in essence, Kant's dual criterion of "correspondence" and "coherence" (save that I would judge it to be applicable to *all* types of human insights, whereas he sought to restrict it to our everyday and our scientific knowledge, via sense experience, of the world of nature). "Correspondence" here signifies conformity to all available and relevant data; "coherence" signifies the internal consistency of our individual judgments or of our closely related clusters of judgments and, even more importantly, the mutual consistency of judgments issuing from different experiences or types of experience. In short, we accept those judgments about (or interpretations of) reality as "true" in proportion (a) as they are based on trustworthy evidence or data and "do justice" to them, and (b) as they are consistent with other judgments rooted in the same or similar data or in data of more or less different basic types.

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century objective idealism

would tend to substitute the single criterion of "coherence" (more inclusively defined to include what I have just distinguished as "correspondence" and "coherence") for my two complementary criteria. My deviation from objective idealism at this point, however, is largely semantic and, therefore, relatively unimportant.

These five planks of my epistemological platform constitute, in conjunction, my third major philosophical presupposition. I believe that *all human knowledge is the product of man's more or less successful attempts to understand reality by interpreting his major generic experiences in their relation to one another.*

4. My *fourth* presupposition concerns the nature of reality and the criterion of "objectivity."

- a) To say that man can acquire knowledge of reality by judicious interpretation of data is to accept such data as clues to reality, that is, to assume that reality does make itself available to us through our primary experiences. Indeed, the only reality which can concern us is that which, in some sense and to some degree, does provide us clues to its actuality and its nature. There may, indeed, be vast reaches of reality of which we men can know nothing, and these reaches may in fact powerfully affect our lives; but, even if this is the case, it is idle to speculate about them because they are, by definition, unencounterable and unknowable. Here I agree with the pragmatists and the positivists that human concern with the actually unknowable is a waste of time. As will appear presently, however, I believe that we *can* know far more about reality than they believe we can.
- b) What, then, do we mean by "knowable reality"? We mean that which we encounter in primary experience as having a character of its own, as impinging upon us coercively—or, in other words, as the *source* of our experientially acquired data. Reality should not be equated with these data; it is that which underlies them and forces them, in a variety of ways, upon our attention.

"Objective" reality, however, is not merely coercive; it is orderly as well. This assertion is partly verified and verifiable, partly an act of faith. Constituted as we are, we can maintain our sanity only in an orderly universe; sheer chaos would quickly rob us of all our rationality. We must therefore assume, as an ultimate act of faith, that reality possesses some kind, or many kinds, of order and regularity. All human efforts to know reality have been based on this ultimate assumption. What is significant is that this assumption has been justified empirically again and again in every area of human search. The hallmark of the "objectively real" is, therefore, coercive order.

- c) To say that our knowledge of reality is reconstructive, in turn, is to



say that its coercive order cannot be immediately apprehended, by direct inspection, but must be progressively explored and plotted. It follows also that we never dare assume that we human mortals have ever explored and apprehended our objective world exhaustively. Here the ancient distinction between appearance and reality becomes crucial. We know, and can know, objective reality only as it appears to us. *All* our knowledge of the real is, first of all, necessarily anthropomorphic in that all we can know of the real is what we men, with our limited, finite, cognitive capacities, *can* know. This is as true of our scientific knowledge of nature as of our moral insights and our knowledge of God. But, secondly, as we probe deeper and deeper into reality and as our reconstructions of it progressively improve, we pass, as it were, from very distorted appearances of the real to more and more accurate and reliable appearances. "Appearance," in short, is essentially a function not of reality itself but of our knowledge of it; the more adequate our knowledge, in any area of inquiry, the more closely, we must assume, does its "appearance" resemble its actual nature *sub specie aeternitatis*.

My fourth presupposition, then, is that "*objective reality*" is *what confronts us with a coercive and orderly character of its own: It is that which we seek to know and which we must know in order to live and live well.*

5. My *fifth* and final basic presupposition relates to our value experiences, our evaluations, and the correlative value dimensions of reality.

- a) I start with the major assumption that man is essentially a purposive being, with the capacity to approve or disapprove of everything that he encounters and does and is. Everything, therefore, is of actual or potential subjective significance (value or disvalue) to him. This assumption can also be stated objectively, in ontological terms. Reality makes its multiple impacts upon man for better and worse; his life and destiny are profoundly and inescapably affected by the complex reality which confronts him and of which he is a part. All his evaluations, therefore, whether they be explicit or implicit, affirmative or negative, right or wrong, are of great importance to him, because the better he evaluates the reality which he encounters, the better equipped he is to live a good life and realize his human destiny. To ignore the role of evaluation or to reduce it to a status of unimportance is tragic obscurantism.
- b) The value dimensions of reality are, therefore, just as "objective" as are its "factual" or nonvalue dimensions. They are objective in the same sense in which causality is objective; they present themselves to us

with an orderly and coercive character of their own which we cannot ignore or misconstrue with impunity any more than we can ignore or misconstrue with impunity the complex pattern of spatiotemporal causality. Only on this assumption, in turn, can we take seriously man's age-old efforts to evaluate more validly and wisely. Significant evaluation is impossible if such evaluation has no appropriate referendum. If nothing is *in fact* more or less valuable, then no evaluation *can* be superior to any other; and if this is the case, then all man's purposive activities are, in the last analysis, mere "sound and fury, signifying nothing."

The distinction between appearance and reality is as valid, and as useful, in the realm of values as in the realm of fact. The only values that can concern us as men are the values which do, in fact, make a difference in our lives and which we can, in principle, progressively explore and apprehend. These values are what they are. But we dare not assume that our knowledge of them is ever wholly adequate or final. We can know them only as they appear to us in our value experiences and as we reconstruct them as best we can. Progress in evaluation is, therefore, advance from more distorted to less distorted appearances of them.

This distinction between appearance and reality has a second important relevance to values. We actually encounter or experience values, whether moral, aesthetic, or religious, only in concrete actualization—in actual persons and human acts, in actual works of art, in actual religious experiences and manifestations of the holy. As I have just said, our apprehensions and evaluations of these actualizations of value are themselves never wholly adequate; all we can hope for are more and more penetrating apprehensions and increasingly valid assessments of such embodied values. Even here we merely progress from less adequate to more adequate appearances. But—and this is the point I would now emphasize—we dare not assume that any embodiment of a value is itself wholly adequate to the value which is embodied.<sup>2</sup> We must believe that the most just man falls short of absolute justice, that the most perfect work of art fails to incorporate all beauty, that essential holiness transcends any and all of its finite historical manifestations. Serious evaluation, in short, must presuppose value dimensions in reality itself which are only partially bodied forth in the world as we encounter it. Hence the useful distinction between absolute values as they are in their real essence, and their more or less adequate concrete appearances in time, i.e., embodied and experienced values.

2. This is true, at least in one important sense, even of the Incarnation. Jesus as the Christ is believed to be the authentic and unique embodiment or revelation of God Himself—in this sense, "very God of very God"—but still not *wholly* identifiable with "God the Father."

- d) The validity or truth of our evaluations can be determined, finally, only in the way in which the validity or truth of our nonevaluative or factual judgments are determined, namely, by using the conjoint criteria of "correspondence" and "coherence." The criterion of "correspondence" requires us to check all our evaluations against our best, i.e., our most reliable and illuminating value experiences; our evaluations will be meaningful and valid only in proportion as they "do justice" to whatever primary-value data are available to us. But our evaluations, like our factual judgments, are never trustworthy, or even meaningful, in isolation, because the values which we seek to apprehend and assess are themselves never isolated or unrelated. We must, therefore, use also the criterion of "coherence," trying our best to make our several evaluations, in the same and in different areas of value, as mutually consistent or coherent as possible.

My final major presupposition, therefore, is axiological, i.e., concerned with values and their evaluation. It is that *Values are embedded in reality itself; that these Values (here conveniently capitalized to distinguish them from their finite embodiments) achieve more or less adequate, but never wholly adequate, concrete manifestation; that man, as a purposive being, seeks to apprehend these Values, abstractly as ideals or standards, and concretely in their several embodiments; and that man's life is good in proportion as his search for the value dimensions of reality is successful and as his resultant responses to them are adequate or proper.*

#### THE GENESIS AND NATURE OF THESE PRESUPPOSITIONS

Before proceeding, I should say a word about my conception of the general nature of all basic philosophical presuppositions, including my own. Some philosophers have tried to proceed wholly deductively, from basic major premises which they accepted uncritically, either as "certain" (issuing from immediate "intuition," or from some supernatural authority, or as "self-evident") or else as arbitrary postulates. Others have attempted to proceed in a purely inductive manner without any basic assumptions or presuppositions. For reasons which I cannot here explore, both of these approaches are, I believe, doomed to failure. In any case, my own approach seeks to mediate between these two simon-pure extremes. Human consciousness presumably develops, in each individual, out of a relatively inchoate and atomistic type of experience, in infancy.

through a gradual specification of experience and a gradual development of interlocking, interpretative concepts and judgments, to whatever maturity of experience and reflection the individual is capable of. Similarly, philosophy, as an on-going venture, never starts from scratch, either with pure experience or pure theory. It starts, in the case of each philosopher, with whatever experiential data and whatever interpretation of these data are initially available and congenial to him. The philosopher then proceeds, with the aid of other philosophers, past and present, to make his implicit major premises more explicit, to clarify and extend his experiential data, and to make his theoretical interpretations of them more powerful and adequate. In the process, he keeps re-examining his major premises and, in the light of all his continuing experience and reflection, to revise them as radically as his estimate of the total situation seems to warrant.

Whether or not this account of the philosophical enterprise recommends itself to my philosophical colleagues, it is at least a summary description of my own process of philosophy. It is important that such an account be given because it indicates, at least briefly, the way in which I have arrived at my basic presuppositions and, more importantly, the way in which I regard them and use them. They express my most basic convictions regarding the universe in which we live and our relation to it. They also express the basic principles underlying my own continuing philosophical inquiry. I make no claim that they are certain, or final, or wholly adequate; indeed, I am quite convinced that they can be none of these things. All I can say for them, on my own authority, is that I have lived with them for years, that I have modified them from time to time when such modification seemed indicated, and that they now seem to me to be far more satisfactory than any alternative variants that I know of. Far more significant, for the reader, is the fact that these are the presuppositions of an old and honorable tradition and that they still make "more sense" to many able and sincere people than their opposites. (It goes without saying that I have been able to formulate them here only in a highly condensed and summary fashion—each of them permits of, and calls for, extensive elaboration and defense.)

It is also apparent that I have refrained entirely from stating my

own substantive conclusions in the major areas of human inquiry, that is, my own specific convictions regarding the world of nature, human nature, the nature of society and its basic institutions, the nature of art and beauty, and the nature of that ultimate luminous mystery which men call God. In short, I have not here attempted to formulate my own positive philosophy at all: I have merely tried to articulate the basic presuppositions of my total philosophical endeavor, the framework, as it were, within which I do my philosophical thinking and arrive at my own basic conclusions. This framework will, however, suffice to dictate, or at least to indicate, some of the basic aims and values of education.

### *Basic Aims and Values of Education*

Before summarizing these aims and values I should like to say a word about the applicability of what follows to the various levels of education.

Since my own teaching experience has been entirely at the college and graduate levels of instruction, it is natural that my mind should be primarily oriented to educational problems as they arise at these advanced levels. Much of what I have to say, moreover, would seem to become progressively more and more practicable the farther up the educational ladder one goes. In these two respects I will be addressing myself primarily to mature scholars and to college and university teachers, and I shall be discussing aims and policies which can be seen to come into their own most fully only at the more advanced levels.

On the other hand, any really basic philosophy of education is, by definition, applicable to all education, to the most elementary no less than to the most advanced. I am hopeful that my basic educational objectives and policies satisfy this criterion, even though, for lack of space, I am unable to indicate explicitly how this is the case. Let me give two concrete illustrations in anticipation of what immediately follows.

I plead for the "liberal" or "open-door" policy, that is, for the students' maximum freedom of choice. This policy is a necessary corollary of my "liberalism" and my hatred of all authoritarianisms. It is most applicable, *explicitly*, at the higher levels where the student does not have to be protected by any form of censorship and where

he is, at least theoretically, mature enough to stand entirely on his own feet and assume the responsibility of his own decisions. Now the farther down the educational ladder we go, the less maturity we find; the young must, of course, be protected as older students no longer need to be—they cannot be given many of the choices to which they will later be morally entitled. This means that the teacher of the young must be judicious in how and to what extent the “open-door” policy is applied; its applicability may well have to be *implicit* more often than explicit. But the elementary teacher’s *attitude* can, with due regard to the pupil’s youth, be as tolerant, liberal, and undogmatic as the *attitude* of the advanced scholar or college teacher. The grade-school teacher can and should be as completely committed to the basic principles of liberal education as anyone else; she must simply be sensible in applying them intelligently and realistically to very young children.

I also plead for certain “skills” and “disciplines” and, no less, for certain basic attitudes. Neither these skills and disciplines nor these attitudes can be fully developed in early youth; they ripen as the child grows up, and they can and should continue to improve throughout a person’s life time. But the *foundation* for all this development *must* be laid in early youth. Much of it is, in fact, laid in the home before kindergarten, and more is deeply ingrained during the first formative years of schooling. The parents and the elementary-school teacher are thus *crucial* factors in the total educational process. The educational edifices we later try to build can be only as strong and tall as their foundations permit.

It would take a thick volume to spell out in detail the application of each of my basic educational aims, values, and principles, to each school level. I must leave it to the reader to apply them for himself, always assuming, of course, that they seem to him to be essentially sound and basically applicable to the total educational process.

#### THE POLICY OF THE “OPEN DOOR”

A major implication of my philosophical presuppositions might be entitled the “*open-door*” educational policy. If it is important for man to explore his total environment as extensively and profoundly as possible, it follows that education should provide maxi-

num opportunity and encouragement for such exploration. No doors to reality should be closed by a priori fiat or social prejudice; no type of experience should be initially suspect or prematurely judged to be nonrevelatory; no specific hypotheses or beliefs should be initially condemned. Every student should, so far as possible, be encouraged to explore all available points of view, all of man's generic experiences, all serious accounts of nature, man, and God, as sympathetically, eagerly, and open-mindedly as possible.

Martin Buber says,

Man's threefold living relation is, first, his relation to the world and to things, second, his relation to men—both to individuals and to the many—third, his relation to the mystery of being—which is dimly apparent through all this but infinitely transcends it—which the philosopher calls the Absolute and the believer calls God, and which cannot in fact be eliminated from the situation even by a man who rejects both designations.<sup>3</sup>

I quote this statement partly because it clearly indicates what I believe to be the three great areas of human concern and exploration, partly because the third area provides a particularly good test of genuine open-mindedness since it is, in our society, an area of sharp controversy. The educational policy of the "open door" would dictate adequate provision and incentive for the most serious exploration of this area, without official, institutional prejudice, either in favor of or against affirmative religious faith. All other controversial areas should, of course, be explored with equal freedom and candor.

But how is this possible since, in fact, no human being who takes himself and his convictions seriously can, as an individual, refrain from taking sides on such momentous issues? The answer, as regards all genuinely liberal schools and colleges, both independent and tax-supported, is clear. (I am here ignoring the special case of explicitly sectarian educational institutions.) The school's *official position* should, so far as possible, be conscientiously neutral as regards all such highly controversial issues; but its *official policy* should be to select, train, and support teachers who are people of real stature and real conviction. These teachers should be not only

3. Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, p. 177, quoted by Nathan A. Scott, Jr., in his excellent *Rehearsals of Discomposure*, p. 248. New York: King's Crown Press, 1952.

permitted, but encouraged, to state, honestly and forcefully, their own deepest convictions on these matters in all relevant contexts, provided only that they make it absolutely clear to their students, at all the educational levels, that these are merely their informed convictions (and never *the* truth) and that each student *must*, as a responsible moral agent, develop his own convictions and live by them at his own risk. In short, the school's ideal objective should be the fostering of the greatest possible reflective commitment—real conviction coupled with real humility and tolerance on the part of all concerned. The more resolutely the school espouses this ideal, and the better its teachers exemplify it, the more effectively will its students be helped to develop themselves into responsible, humane persons.

But, it might be asked: *Can* an academic institution be officially neutral on important, controversial issues? Indeed, *should* it strive for such neutrality; is it not, like an individual person, morally obligated to take sides? And, finally, *need* such official commitment involve intolerance and censorship? My own answer to these questions would be as follows: It may indeed be impossible for any school to be wholly neutral on these matters. It should, however, be as neutral as possible, not in a spirit of indifference, but in ultimate loyalty to the untrammelled search for truth. This neutrality should not, however, be construed negatively—for example, as *not* providing opportunity for religious instruction and religious worship. It should be construed, rather, as affirmative support for competing positions, e.g., for informed, religious belief and *also* for the most cogent defense of agnosticism and atheism. Such a policy would, I believe, be most likely to generate official tolerance for conflicting points of view and to give the student maximum freedom of choice and maximum incentive to responsible maturity.

I would add, however, that one of the glories of a free society is its ability to harbor different types of educational institutions—large and small, public and private, sectarian and nonsectarian. Our total educational process and our total venture in scholarly inquiry are bound to benefit from this diversity *provided* that all these institutions exhibit intellectual integrity and genuine respect for different expressions of such integrity. I do not see how a free society like ours can permit an academic institution to continue if it is



demonstrably suppressing or distorting such truth as is available to men, that is, if it has abandoned the tasks of education and scholarly research and has become merely a vehicle for propaganda. But, on the other hand, I do not see how our society can preserve its cherished freedom unless it allows different educational institutions, like different individuals, to pursue the truth and to formulate the principles of education in different ways. This social tolerance for deviant institutions is defensible not on the ground that all approaches are equally good but on the ground that, since man is incorrigibly finite and fallible, he dare not a priori rule out any intellectual or educational venture which men of ability, honesty, and humility wish to undertake in an experimental spirit.

#### THIS POLICY IS DICTATED BY THE SPIRIT OF WESTERN LIBERALISM

This educational goal is, of course, dictated by the Western spirit of liberalism and by any philosophy of education which seeks to articulate this spirit. I have refrained thus far from using the terms "liberalism" and "liberal" because their meaning has become so ambiguous. By "liberalism" I do *not* mean, on the one hand, any form of doctrinaire radicalism. Liberalism is essentially opposed to *all* dogmatisms, secular or religious, radical, middle-of-the-road, or conservative. It stands, in sharp opposition to *all* types of coercive authoritarianism, for freedom, tolerance, and honest critical inquiry. But the "liberalism" I am here espousing is not, on the other hand, a wishy-washy tolerance of everything, even of intolerance. The only liberalism I would defend is one which is rooted in a profound respect for man as a responsible moral agent, and for all those basic rights and freedoms without which man cannot hope to develop a responsible maturity and without which society must inevitably lapse into either anarchy or tyranny.

#### THE SPECIFIC VIRTUES OF LIBERALISM

Liberalism, so conceived, has its own basic values which it must defend at all costs because they condition its vitality and, indeed, its very existence. The specific virtues which it must espouse and the vices which it must combat can usefully be defined in the context of a liberal educational policy. The three basic liberal virtues are (a) ~~serious concern~~, (b) ~~intellectual and moral integrity~~, and

(c) profound humility; the three corresponding vices are frivolous or cynical indifference, lack of integrity, and arrogance. Teachers should be hired only if they possess these three virtues, in addition to intellectual competence, and they should be fired either for incompetence or for exemplifying any one or more of these three vices. It should also be the prime concern of the school assiduously to foster these virtues and combat these vices in its students as well as to cultivate whatever intellectual and creative talents they may possess.

Please note that these virtues are not here arbitrarily selected and recommended; they are dictated by the basic presuppositions listed above. Man cannot hope to respond appropriately to his environment unless he can discover its true nature, and he cannot apprehend it for what it is unless he addresses himself to it in a spirit of serious concern. But mere concern will not suffice; it can, in and of itself, all too easily induce wishful thinking. Hence the need for intellectual honesty and moral courage, the determination to learn the truth, however surprising or unwelcome, and to face it and live with it. Serious and honest concern, in turn, can very easily generate overconfidence in one's own beliefs and an arrogant condemnation of the equally honest and concerned beliefs of others. Here the only ultimate corrective is not the superficial and sentimental live-and-let-live tolerance of indifference but, rather, that genuine humility which reflects a profound realization of human finitude and the inevitable inadequacy of man's greatest knowledge and virtue. Such humility will not only express itself in our dealings with our fellow-men but will also induce in us a natural piety toward nature, a receptivity for the best that men have thought and done in our own and other cultures, and, finally, an "openness" to whatever mysterious forces of holiness and love may be seeking ingress into our hearts and minds.

It is also to be noted that these three liberal virtues are the essential conditions of a liberal society. Men cannot band themselves into a free, responsible community unless they feel the urgent need for voluntary co-operation and the desire to recognize and share in corporate responsibility. And they cannot hope to co-operate effectively with one another for their own and the common good save on the basis of widespread integrity. Such co-operative effort is,

finally, bound to fail unless men persistently acknowledge their own finitude and unless they really respect the rights of others to seek truth and justice in their own way and to believe what their own insights and reflections impel them to believe. Concern, integrity, and humility provide the only possible basis for full and responsible social co-operation; they constitute the vital nerve of our democratic faith.

This need not, and should not, imply an idolatrous veneration for the democratic processes of free association and co-operation under law. For these processes are themselves merely the means—though so far as we can see, *much* the best, and perhaps the *only*, means—for the development of man's highest social potentialities and for steady progress toward the realization of man's proper destiny. The truly liberal goal of education can never be defined merely in terms of a society, actual or ideal; we must resist the temptation to absolutize any form of social organization and to make education *merely* a means to the furtherance of a social goal. In the liberal perspective, education and democracy are *both* institutional means for the achievement of more ultimate human ends. What is here so significant is that they are clearly complementary means, each requiring the lively support of the other. Liberal education is impossible in a thoroughly undemocratic society, and no society can hope to become or remain truly democratic without the help of liberal education.

The "open door" policy in education, then, while maintaining official neutrality on all substantive controversial issues—economic and political, artistic and technological, philosophical and theological—must actively defend its own foundations; it must, to survive, safeguard the very presuppositions of liberal inquiry and free, co-operative association. The school should resist the temptation to take official sides in any of the areas of continuing research and experimentation, but it *must* take sides, officially, on the prime conditions of such experimentation and inquiry. It must proclaim and sustain the individual's duty and his right to think for himself, to speak freely, and to believe whatever his conscience dictates, and it must courageously combat all internal and external encroachments upon these basic freedoms. It must foster enlightened tolerance on every front and it must fight intolerance wherever it rears its ugly head.

## THE VALUE OF CONTROVERSY AND OF COMMITMENT

The school has one additional liberal obligation which is the affirmative counterpart of its official neutrality on controversial issues. This is to foster, in all appropriate ways, active inquiry into, and instruction in, all of man's major creative ventures. The school should not officially take sides on specific economic and political, artistic and theological issues, but it should find and train teachers who are competent to probe into these areas, both creatively and critically, to define and to debate the crucial issues in each area, to set in sharp relief man's boldest dreams and most hazardous convictions, and also to see to it that these are all duly subjected to responsible criticism. This can be done, up to a point, by an individual teacher who is himself both creative and critical, capable of active commitment, as a concerned agent, and also of objective criticism, as a dispassionate observer. Indeed, the genius of liberal inquiry and teaching is precisely this ability to engage in the dialectical process of acceptance *and* criticism, enjoyment *and* appraisal, belief *and* doubt. There are limits, however, beyond which it is unreasonable to expect any individual to be equally sympathetic to both sides of a controversy. Hence, the importance of having on each faculty teachers of more or less sharply conflicting beliefs not only on the great perennial puzzles of mankind but also on lesser controversial problems. Students should have the opportunity to hear from both the right and the left on social and political issues; they should be exposed to conflicting estimates of art in general and specific works of art; they should be introduced to religious faith and religious skepticism, to a variety of orthodoxies and heresies. And these alternatives should be presented to them not as straw men but as vital alternatives.

It is essential that the student be presented with more than one set of beliefs in order that he may come to realize that men are in fact in profound disagreement on all these vital matters and in order that, in addition, he be given the privilege of free choice. The totalitarian ideal is monolithic; the totalitarian state presumes to know *the* truth and to inculcate it by indoctrination as the one and only orthodoxy. The liberal ideal is the diametric opposite; a liberal society recognizes the inevitability, and the long-range value, of conflicting opinions, and dedicates itself to the task of teaching its members how to make

their own responsible decisions on all controversial issues, *i.e.*, how to live and act as free, responsible, moral agents. It is the primary task of liberal education to introduce its students to this spirit of liberal inquiry, open controversy, and responsible individual decision as early and as efficiently as possible.

But the student should also be taught that controversy is not an end in itself but only the essential means to free individual decision and commitment. He should be helped, at an early age, to distinguish clearly between the proper official neutrality of the school, as an institution, on controversial issues and the impropriety of attempting, as an individual, to be neutral in any of these areas. He should learn that man cannot live without taking sides, without decision and action, and that he cannot live well unless his decisions are enlightened, deeply felt, and carefully reflected on. Hence, the supreme importance of having teachers on every faculty who exemplify, both in precept and practice, what it means to have entered deeply into this or that type of human experience with sympathetic insight and what it means to have emerged from such experience and reflection with deep ringing convictions. Above all, the student should be helped in every possible way to learn how to believe something with all his heart and still be tolerant of the equally firm beliefs of others who disagree with him. In short, he should acquire, as early and firmly as possible, the difficult art of genuinely reflective commitment in every field of major human endeavor and belief. Without the capacity for such commitment he is doomed to sterility and frustration; without reflection and humility he cannot hope to escape bigotry and dogmatism. Wholehearted commitment *and* reflection are essential, from the liberal perspective, for the good life of responsible freedom.

### *The Educational Process*

We can now proceed to spell out some of the chief implications for the actual educational process of my five basic philosophical pre-suppositions and of my resultant conception of the basic aims and values of education.

#### THE SCHOOL AS A DISTINCTIVE INSTITUTION

First of all, it should be clear that the school is the only institution in our society whose primary function and responsibility are edu-

cational. Other major institutions—the state, the family, the church, and even “business” (taken in its most inclusive sense) do, of course, have important subsidiary educative functions, for better and for worse, but each of these other institutions has a quite different primary function. Thus, the state is designed to protect and to promote the public safety and welfare; the family, to provide for the procreation and nurture of the child and for the most intimate companionship between man and wife; the church, to promote the worship of Deity and to foster the spirituality of its members; business, to provide the community with its multiple economic necessities and physical comforts. In terms of a somewhat risky metaphor, the state, the family, the church, and business might be said to be, respectively, the “sword and shield,” the “heart,” the “soul,” and the “hands” of our society. This division of labor leaves it to the school to function as the “mind” of the body politic. Granted the multiple interdependencies of these great institutions and the many ways in which their legitimate activities overlap, it still is true that our society can thrive only if each of these institutions performs its own primary function as well as possible and carefully refrains from arrogating to itself the chief functions of its sister institutions. The school must never be allowed to become merely an arm of government, however much support it may receive from public funds. It must never try to replace the family in the nurture of the young, however grave the failures of our family system. It must never presume to function as a church, however much it can and should contribute to religious enlightenment and piety. And it should never conceive of itself merely as a business, even on a nonprofit basis, however considerable may be the funds and extensive the property which it is called upon to administer for educational purposes. In proportion as the school attempts to perform any of these vital functions of our other major institutions, it not only condemns itself to inefficiency and malpractice, in trying to do what it is not properly qualified to do, but it is also bound to neglect its own proper task, namely, the preservation, dissemination, and extension of man’s knowledge of himself and his total environment, along with all the techniques of teaching and learning.

This need not and should not imply that our major institutions should all be so highly specialized that each can merely perform

one function in total indifference to other values and goals. On the contrary, the liberal ideal of the well-rounded man applies *mutatis mutandis* to the institutions of a liberal society. For example, each of our major institutions other than the school has its appropriate stake in man's search for truth and its appropriate responsibility for education. Government should be as enlightened as possible and should actively support education and research. The impact of the family is, for better or for worse, of crucial importance in the education of boys and girls in their most impressionable and formative years. A church which is indifferent to truth and education quickly degenerates into a stronghold of superstition and bigotry. And how can business and industry hope to serve the public well without enlightenment and a respect for enlightenment? Nevertheless, the school is the only institution whose *primary* responsibility is scholarship and education, the pursuit of knowledge, and the cultivation of the mind.

Thus to stress knowledge and the development of the mind as the central concern of the educational process need not at all necessitate a restrictive conception of either mind or knowledge. On the contrary, the truly liberal conception of mind is hostile to any narrow intellectualism. The term "mind" should here be taken to signify man's *total* cognitive equipment—his senses, emotions, imagination, and will, no less than his intellect or reason—and "knowledge" should include the whole range of human insights, appreciations, appraisals, and decisions. It is with man as man, rich and complex in his capacities and conscious activities, that a truly liberal education is concerned. It takes him as he is, in all his concrete actuality and with all his undeveloped potentialities; it seeks to help him, at each educational level, more fully to realize his undeveloped capacities for mature knowledge, decision, and action; it tries to enable him to be himself at his own unique responsible best.

#### THE SCHOOL AS A LIBERAL COMMUNITY

The ideal matrix for the educational process, so conceived, is the school organized and functioning as a liberal community of older and younger searchers after truth. To describe the school as a "community" is to emphasize the corporate, social character of education. Liberal education is not a solitary but a co-operative and com-

munal activity, from kindergarten to the highest level of technical research. The school is a "liberal" community—not an authoritarian or regimented community, on the one hand, and not an anarchistic aggregate of non-co-operative individuals, on the other—in proportion as all its members, older and younger, more and less able, are willing and responsible participants in a common enterprise. In a paternalistic community, authority is vested in a dominant minority which, however gently or firmly and in whatever spirit of benevolence, imposes its will on a more or less docile or rebellious majority. In such an authoritarian school the teachers are presumed to know the truth and are duty bound to try to compel their pupils to learn it from them. As a school approaches the opposite extreme of anarchy, each teacher and each student tends to be "on his own" and to do what he pleases, with no sense of corporate responsibility or communal loyalty. In a truly liberal academic community, in contrast, it is taken for granted that each has something to contribute to the common good and that each has much to learn from his fellows. The laudable motto of early communism, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need," might well be adopted as the key formula of such a liberal school community.

The concept of such an ideal community, bound together by a common tradition, shared needs, and a common objective, has other important implications and overtones.

*"Liberal Education" and "Vocational Training."* The first of these is the recognition that so-called "liberal education" and "vocational training" should be conceived of neither as hostile rivals nor as mutually exclusive enterprises but, on the contrary, as two essential and complementary aspects of the total preparation of the individual for his total life. The tendency of the proponents of liberal education to look down on vocational training with aristocratic contempt is as indefensible as is the tendency of money-minded and business-minded vocationalists to regard liberal education as a useless luxury. The total educational process, liberally conceived, is equally concerned with man's highest cultural development and with the most effective training of his specialized capacities. Its dual goal is man's highest cultural development *and* his efficient and joyful performance of the specialized tasks for which he is best qualified. The basic liberal assumption is that, on the one hand, all of



man's great insights and speculations, all his general and specialized knowledge, all his major and minor creations, all his spiritual ventures, experiences, and beliefs, are of intrinsic value and are infinitely precious to him; but that, no less surely, all his practical activities, however simple or complex, all his day-by-day decisions and actions, are not only necessary but can and should be honorable, socially useful, and deeply satisfying. Liberalism asserts that man is a complex being with many needs and many proper activities, physical and mental, practical and spiritual, routine and creative, and that a well-rounded liberal education will help man to satisfy all these needs and indulge in all these activities more skilfully, wisely, and justly.

It is an everlasting pity that so sharp a dichotomy has established itself in our minds between liberal education and vocational training, with the false implication that the former is somehow higher, though useless, and the latter, useful but somehow crass and demeaning. If these two equally essential preparations for life are thus divorced, a *merely* liberal education will indeed tend to be useless, and a *merely* vocational training, crass. What is obviously needed is a truly liberal academic community in which the study of art and typewriting, of philosophy and accounting, of theology and medicine, of pure and applied science are, though admittedly very different, judged to be equally honorable and valuable in their several ways. In such a community the so-called liberal disciplines would indeed be liberal because they would be studied and taught with an eye to the total enrichment of the life of responsible members of a free society; and in such a community the acquisition of the vocational skills, from the simplest to the most complex, would be equally liberal because they would be taught, not in a spirit of predatory egoism, but in a spirit of deep social concern for the needs of others and for the common good.

*"Curricular" and "Extracurricular" Activities.* A liberal academic community would, in the second place, do everything in its power to break down the unfortunate cleavage between "curricular" and "extracurricular" activities on the campus. Most students today suffer from a more or less acute state of academic schizophrenia. In class their orientation tends to be intellectualistic, their attitude apathetic; out of class they come to life and plunge frantically into a

variety of social and athletic activities. Seldom if ever do most of them see any significant relation between their studies and their dominant interests; as a result, their studies remain largely unmotivated and their campus activities largely irresponsible and uninformed. A truly liberal academic community would not tolerate this disastrous split. It would concern itself with the total personality of the student during all his waking hours. It would try to make clear to him the humane and practical significance of all his "liberal" and "vocational" studies, and it would make every effort to integrate his countless "extracurricular" activities, on campus and off, with his studies, mindful of their profound effect upon his maturing character and his actual working values. Liberal education, in short, is essentially unified, not fragmented, organicistic, not atomistic. It is directed to the rounded development of the total personality and to all that the student is and thinks and does. Its goal is the well-integrated person, equally alive and equally responsible on every front; its purpose is to help the youngster develop into a mature person who can work and play, vote and pray, intelligently, sensitively, and responsibly.

*The "Ethos" of the Academic Community.* Absolutely crucial for the total educational process, so conceived, is the prevailing *ethos* or temper of the academic community. Selection of teachers, their working conditions and their pay, the physical plant, the curriculum, extracurricular programs—all these and many other factors are of course of very great importance. But most important of all is the dominant corporate spirit of the entire community as it reflects itself among all who share in its life and work—administrators and service personnel, teachers and students, parents and members of school boards. Any one who is at all sensitive to this intangible and elusive factor is well aware, as he visits school after school, how very greatly the *ethos* can vary from campus to campus and how profoundly influential this factor is in everything that transpires under, or near, the academic roof. The *ethos* of the school can be unfriendly, suspicious, grudging, and even hostile or rebellious; it can be friendly, confident, out-going, and enthusiastic; it can be anything between these two extremes—but whatever it is, it is pervasive and contagious, for better or for worse. A lively, liberal *ethos* is, of course, the subtle product of a sound liberal academic

tradition, of bold liberal policies, of a well-planned, liberal curriculum, etc., but it also functions causally; if it is operative, many major obstacles can be overcome; but, if it is absent, the finest plant and the ablest faculty cannot make the educational process really liberal.

#### WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE TAUGHT—SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND DISCIPLINES

We cannot hope to be realistic in our analysis of the educational process or effective in its direction until we have asked ourselves the question: What, in fact, *can* be directly taught, that is, imparted to the student through formal instruction? If we can answer this question we can then ask: What *should* we attempt to teach our students?

My own answer to the first of these questions is clear. We can help the student by formal class instruction to develop certain basic "liberal" skills; we can teach him, within the limits of his native ability, the basic "liberal" disciplines; we can teach him a great variety of more or less complex vocational skills and procedures—but we cannot directly "teach" him any basic attitudes or values. I can best explain this distinction by listing at once what I believe to be the basic skills which all students should be taught and the basic "liberal" disciplines to which all should, at least in some measure, be introduced. These skills and disciplines can very clearly be distinguished from the attitudes and values which, I believe, cannot be "taught" in any formal way.

*The Four Basic Skills.* If a student is to develop his innate human capacities as fully as possible and prepare himself as well as possible for life as a person and as a responsible citizen, he must acquire, so far as he can, all four of these basic complementary skills:

- a) *Logical-Linguistic.* He must learn to think clearly and consistently, and he must learn to use as accurately and felicitously as possible the language, or languages, requisite for such clear and consistent thinking in various crucial areas. I have here linked the logical and linguistic skills because it is now evident that thought requires a linguistic medium. We never think *in vacuo* but always in some language of human reflection and communication. The language each of us uses most is, of course, his own native tongue. But there is no substitute for the language, or languages, of mathematics for accurate thinking in that field, or for the specialized languages of the fine arts and literature, or of

science, or of other well-developed areas of human inquiry, for precise thinking and effective communication in these several areas. The impossibility of translating poetry or even first-rate literary prose from one verbal language to another without serious distortion underlines the importance of learning at least one foreign language well enough to be able to use it.

This conjoint logical-linguistic skill, in its multiple ramifications, can be "taught" by able teachers to willing students. What cannot thus be taught is a passion for clear and consistent thinking or a "feel for," or love of, a language and its precise and felicitous use.

- b) "*Factual.*" Every student needs to learn a great many facts about himself and his physical, social, and cosmic environment if he is to survive, and many more if he is to live happily and usefully. He also needs to learn what a "fact" is and how facts are determined or established, i.e., the nature of factual judgments and the role of primary experience and reflective interpretation in all factual analysis. All this can, in principle, be "taught" and "learned" in class. What cannot be directly "taught" or "learned" is a respect for fact, hatred of error, illusion, and evasion, and an unquenchable thirst for reliable factual information.
- c) "*Normative.*" Every human being, and therefore every student, is, as we have already pointed out, evaluating all the time; he is forever assessing the situations in which he finds himself, the world which he encounters, and his own character, motives, and objectives and those of others, according to some standards of value. But the uneducated person's evaluations are crude and uninformed, morally and socially, aesthetically and religiously. A student needs, therefore, to be taught how to evaluate, in all the major areas of evaluation, more sensitively and objectively. He should be helped to learn the nature and hazards of the authoritarian claim to an infallible knowledge of absolute values as well as the nature and implications of a complete or nihilistic denial of all objective values. He should also learn the possibility and advantages of the middle road of "critical realism" which asserts, on the one hand, that values are objective and that men can apprehend them more and more adequately, but which denies, in principle, that finite men can ever know any values infallibly.

All this, once again, can be "taught" by a skilful teacher and "learned" by a willing student of reasonable ability. What cannot be thus directly taught and learned is a relish for rich and significant value experiences, a respect for objective values both as actualized and as ideally envisaged, and a sincere desire to learn how to evaluate more sensitively and objectively.

- d) "*Synoptic.*" The final basic skill which all students can and should be helped to acquire in some degree is the skill of seeing things in wider and deeper perspective. We are all bedevilled by countless provincial-

isms—spatial and temporal, racial and social, geographic and national, cultural and religious—which narrow our horizons, induce self-righteousness and bigotry, and create endless misunderstanding, intolerance, and hostility in our dealings with our fellow-men. These multiple provincialisms can and should be identified and described, their deplorable effects indicated, and the many ways of extending our horizons pointed out. All this too can be “taught” and “learned” with more or less success, though no human being can hope to outgrow all his provincialisms and really see life *sub specie aeternitatis*. What cannot thus be directly “taught” is a lively realization of the evils of provincialism and the value to the individual and to mankind of more embracing and catholic perspectives.

*The Inculcation of Attitudes.* If this analysis is at all correct, it follows that the core of the formal educational process should be the acquisition of these four basic complementary skills. In proportion as any individual acquires these skills, he becomes equipped to deal competently with reality and life and becomes, to this extent, a liberally educated person. But it is one thing to acquire these skills; it is another thing really to value them and use them. You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. You can do a good deal to drill these skills into your students, but you cannot, by any *formal* pedagogical devices, induce them to respect logical clarity and linguistic felicity, to respect fact and abhor error, to respect mature, responsible evaluation, and to feel a passionate hatred for all divisive provincialisms and a corresponding hunger for synoptic perspectives and enlightened, open-minded tolerance.

How, then, can these all-important attitudes be cultivated in the young? Only, I believe, by indirection—by example, inspiration, and contagion. This is where the personality of the teacher, his imagination and his moral stature, become crucially important. Teachers of deep conviction and genuine enthusiasm can do a great deal to generate these attitudes in their students. This, in fact, constitutes the art, in contradistinction to the science or technique, of teaching. But the most gifted and devoted teacher can accomplish only so much single-handed. His effectiveness is greatly enhanced if his efforts are reinforced by those of like-minded teachers, equally impassioned and enthusiastic and equally skilful in the unteachable and infinitely precious art of teaching. But even more important than the conjoint efforts of a few inspired teachers is the *ethos* of the

entire academic community, for it is this *ethos* that will determine, more than any other single factor on the campus, what attitudes and values will in fact be instilled into the hearts of the students. A small group of teachers, however talented, will be able to do relatively little to generate these attitudes and inculcate these values in their students if the prevailing *ethos* of the school is neutral or hostile. Conversely, teachers of relatively limited stature as persons and as teachers can, in conjunction, accomplish a great deal if the prevailing academic *ethos* is affirmative and strong in its support of these liberal attitudes and values.

The foregoing analysis of the total educational process in terms of what can and cannot be "taught" (in a strict, formal sense) has at least the merit of highlighting one of the paradoxical aspects of liberal education—namely, that what is most important can be achieved only by indirection, and that what can be achieved directly is, in the last analysis, merely a means, not an end in itself. The teacher's total responsibility is, on this analysis, *not* fully discharged in his formal instruction; far more important than all his knowledge and skill is his character, or his basic attitudes, his scale of values, and his philosophy of life. It is these intangibles which distinguish the great teacher from the competent teacher, the beloved and revered teacher from the feared and respected teacher. And it is the presence or absence of these intangibles in the campus *ethos* which makes some schools outstanding in intellectual ferment and social responsibility, others little more than factories which turn out, year after year, individuals who have "satisfied" certain academic "requirements." Teaching, in short, is both a science and an art and the great teacher is great because he excels in both respects.

*The Basic "Liberal" Disciplines.* The four skills just enumerated, and the correlative affirmative attitudes and values should all, of course, be the concern of all teachers, whatever their specialized training and interest, and of all students, whatever their distinctive aptitudes and temperaments, because they constitute the prime condition of, and essential foundation for, anyone's liberal education. They and they alone can liberate man from the tyrannies of sloppy thinking and slovenly use of language, factual confusion, normative crudity, and provincial bigotry.

The basic liberal "disciplines," in turn, issue from the application

of these skills and attitudes to different generic aspects or areas of experience and reality. We cannot here examine these disciplines in any detail, but we can at least enumerate the most important among them and indicate their complementary relation to each other.

- a) *The formal disciplines.* ~~These include the systematic study of correct and fruitful thinking, on the one hand, and of language in general, and the several languages, notably the verbal languages, on the other.~~ The two great disciplines explicitly concerned with logical analysis are logic and mathematics. The disciplines explicitly concerned with language in general are linguistics and semantics, and most of the specific verbal languages of mankind have by now been subjected to disciplined study.
- b) *The factual disciplines.* All the disciplines are necessarily oriented to ~~certain facts, but some of the major disciplines are predominantly factually oriented.~~ This is obviously true of the natural sciences; their primary concern is to discover the complex structure of this or that aspect of the world of nature, including human nature. It is also true of the social sciences—of economics and political science, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology—in proportion as they are scientific in primary orientation rather than prescriptive or concerned with social policy. The natural sciences are exemplary in factual precision; the social sciences, in turn, are becoming increasingly important today, because mankind stands so desperately in need of reliable factual knowledge about our human society and its institutions.
- c) *The normative disciplines.* ~~Each of the liberal disciplines is, in its own way, necessarily evaluative, but, once again, some are explicitly and predominantly so. Chief among these are ethics, the systematic study of the right and the good; aesthetics, the general study of beauty in art and nature; the several areas of artistic and literary criticism; and, finally, the systematic study of religion which should subsume the doctrinally anchored theologies of the world's main religions and sects.~~ It is these disciplines, each with a long and honorable past, which address themselves to the specific task of exploring the good, the beautiful, and the holy both in themselves and in their concrete manifestations, of formulating standards of mature appraisal, and of applying these standards to concrete situations.
- d) *The synoptic disciplines.* ~~However pluralistic our universe may be and however diverse our various experiences of it, the fact remains that reality, as we encounter it and partially reconstruct it, does exhibit many types of unity and cohesion. Chief among the matrices of significant relationships are time, space, causality, and value. It is these "binders" which constitute the bases of the synoptic disciplines, that is, the disciplines with which we try to explore the major ways in~~

which things and events stand in meaningful relationship to one another. History as a discipline operates primarily along the axis of time; it is in essence synoptic since all human experience occurs in time. Geography correspondingly explores space and its multiple significances for human life. Philosophy is, in a sense, even more synoptic since it surveys all spatiotemporal phenomena in their essential diversities and similarities, their basic causal interconnections and, in addition, their relation to actualized and ideal values. Finally, the liberal study of religion can and should be one of the richest synoptic disciplines since religion is man's ultimate attempt to relate time and eternity, the profane and holy, causality and freedom, fact and value, objective theory and existential decision to one another in a meaningful and life-giving manner.

These, then, are the four great families of major disciplines. A soundly conceived school curriculum will, therefore, give every student as adequate a training in each of them as time and his native ability permit. Each student should be helped and encouraged to learn to think as clearly as possible, with the aid of logic and mathematics; to achieve competence, if not felicity, in his mother tongue and in one or more of the other major "languages" most likely to be beneficial to him; to become as factually informed and factually minded as possible regarding the world of nature and the society of which he is a part; to acquire greater sensitivity to moral, aesthetic, and religious values, and to learn how to make his value judgments in all these areas more responsible and mature; and, finally, so far as he is able, to see the present in the illuminating context of the past, the here in the context of the there, and, above all, the relation of the proximate to the ultimate, of the finite to the infinite, of fact to value, and of the secular to the holy. The farther he is able to travel along this great highway of significant human culture, the better equipped will he be for life as a person, as a member of smaller and larger social groups, and as a finite creature endowed with choice and moral responsibility.

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF FLEXIBLE ADAPTATION TO SPECIFIC NEEDS

The foregoing account of man's basic liberal skills, attitudes, and disciplines may suffice to indicate the larger educational strategy which seems to me to be dictated by my fundamental philosophical presuppositions and by a truly liberal philosophy of education as I



conceive of it. It is, of course, far too brief and condensed to be adequate even at the level of strategy. But what must now be emphasized is the necessity of translating this or any other strategic blueprint of education into tactical terms, that is, of thinking out the applicability of these very general rubrics and principles to each of the educational levels, to the very divergent needs and capacities of individual students at each level, and to the widely different traditions and resources of school communities in various sections of our country. Such translation calls for infinite flexibility, patience, shrewdness, tact, and courage. If the resultant educational product is to be really meaningful and valuable, we must take our students as we find them—at each age level, in this or that specific community with all its social traditions and pressures, in this period of history. The most idealistic curriculum is wasted on students unable to benefit from it; what will inform and inspire one student will leave another student ignorant and bored; many a venture can be successful in one community and utterly unsuccessful in another. The basic principle, “the more liberal education the better,” in no way contradicts the correlative principle that only that educational process is realistic which actually takes root and becomes operative in the hearts and minds of the students in our charge.

The principle of flexible adaptation also dictates the fullest recognition of whatever we now know about the ripening of human capacities from early youth through adolescence into maturity. For example, memorizing and abstract reasoning both have their appropriate roles in the total educational process. We know, however, that the ability to memorize is pronounced in our earlier years and that our ability to think abstractly increases as we grow older. Other capacities, for example, the ability to evaluate, are evident all along the line and invite appropriate cultivation at each educational level. These and many other crucial factors must be taken into account in devising efficient educational tactics in each school community.

Such tactics can be devised, of course, only by teachers and administrators who are themselves well educated in the great liberal tradition. Here, as elsewhere, water will not rise higher than its source. No school can be educationally superior to the conjoint training and wisdom of those who are in control. This indicates

another major responsibility of the school, namely, to provide its teachers and administrators with every possible opportunity and incentive to correct, so far as possible, their own educational deficiencies and to continue, until they retire from active service, their own liberal education. Much can be done along these lines through close association of teachers in the different disciplines—through common projects, study groups, etc.; much can also be accomplished in carefully planned and financed leaves of absence and summer study. We must never forget that in a truly liberal academic community everyone, teachers no less than students, are continuously engaged in the educational process—a process which no one ever completes.

#### THE JEFFERSONIAN CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

A final word must be added regarding what some may feel to be the aristocratic overtones or implications of my account of the educational process. This issue is of major importance and calls for a forthright statement.

I have assumed throughout that man is essentially a purposive being; that all his purposive activities are motivated by a desire to improve himself and to promote whatever causes command his allegiance; that he can, therefore, always do better or worse, advance or regress, according to his own relevant standards; that these standards are themselves more or less valid, that is, more or less in conformity with the objective values which in fact are operative in human life; and, finally, that it is the inclusive purpose of education to help men improve their working standards and learn how to conform to these improved standards more and more adequately. I have assumed, in short, that life itself is selective, rewarding some motives, intentions, and types of behavior and penalizing others; that integrity and love, for example, produce individual well-being and social harmony, whereas their opposites produce personal disintegration and social tension. I believe that truth and justice, beauty and holiness, have a character of their own and that we prosper only in proportion as we apprehend their true nature and actualize them in our lives.

If this is true, it follows that some men are in fact wiser than others, that some works of art are more successful and more signif-

icant than other works of art, that some social attitudes, types of organization, and kinds of corporate action are more beneficial than others for the commonweal, and that some men and women are more susceptible to, and expressive of, spiritual light and power than are the majority of their fellows. In short, it seems to be a very obvious fact that men are *not* equal in native capacity or in final achievement in any area of human effort. They are very unequal, some excelling in this respect, others in that. Life itself, in a word, seems to operate in a very aristocratic fashion, its regularities and dynamisms producing among men, as they do in the world of nature, very uneven results, some vastly superior to others. An attitude of honest and clear-headed realism would dictate the fullest recognition of this fact—that truth does differ from error and is preferable to it, that justice is preferable to injustice, authentic art to its sentimental variants, love to hatred, peace to war, etc., and that, in addition, people do in fact differ very greatly in the degree to which they are able to find and to actualize the better rather than the worse. To deny this objectively ordained hierarchy of values and this unevenness of human performance is to lapse into a hopelessly unrealistic and utopian egalitarianism which flies in the face of everything we know.

The Jeffersonian conception of democracy is, as I interpret it, entirely consistent with this realistic interpretation of life and reality. What Jefferson advocated was not egalitarianism but the sound democratic principle of helping each individual, without regard to race, color, or creed, to make the most of himself, to rise as high in the scale of values as his native endowment permits—this for his own sake and also for the sake of society. Each individual is entitled to such help, Jefferson believed, because of his intrinsic value as a person; and society, particularly a democratic society, sorely needs leaders as liberally educated as possible for posts of civic responsibility. Hence Jefferson's pride in the University of Virginia which was to be open to all who could qualify for admission and which was to educate the unusually able for social leadership.

This Jeffersonian fusion of objective aristocracy and social democracy seems to me to be as valid today as ever. To tolerate special privileges on the basis of race, creed, color, or social and economic background is indeed profoundly undemocratic and illiberal. But to

refuse to give the able and ambitious student educational opportunities which his less able and less ambitious fellows do not desire and could not use is as unjust to the promising individual as it is harmful to the community. The motto, "To each according to his ability," would seem to be inescapably wise and just, provided only that the *ethos* of the school and of the wider community supports its democratic correlative, "From each according to his gifts."

I have already indicated what, in the light of my philosophical presuppositions, I believe the school should do for the individual in our society, for our society as an experimental democratic community, and for the cause of religion. I can, therefore, summarize very briefly whatever seems to me to call for special emphasis in each of these large areas of academic responsibility.

### *The School and the Individual*

The first responsibility of the school is to each student as an individual, while he is still exposed to formal instruction and in anticipation of his life as a mature person and citizen. Liberalism, stemming as it does out of our Hebraic-Christian and our democratic traditions, is radically opposed to the exaltation of any social group at the expense of the individual, or to any compelled sacrifice of the individual for the greater glory and power of the group. The truly liberal community will reflect this profound concern for the individual, whatever his native endowment; it will do everything in its power to promote his personal welfare.

It will seek to do so, however, not sentimentally but realistically; it will take fully into account man's capacity for loyalty to other individuals, to a variety of social groups, and to values and causes which can give meaning and direction to human life. It will therefore, while helping him to develop himself as freely and creatively as possible, simultaneously help him to discover how he can best be of service to his fellow-men. It will, in short, seek to educate him for a life of creative responsibility, a life in which he will not only make the maximum use of his creative potentialities but in which he will also be eager to use his various capacities in a socially responsible manner.

The liberal school will strive to achieve this objective by doing full justice to the individual's native spontaneity, on the one hand,

and, on the other, his need for discipline and training. Aware that undisciplined spontaneity inevitably leads to personal and social anarchy, it will not stress spontaneity at the expense of discipline; but, equally aware that mere regimentation can produce nothing but humanly frustrated robots, it will always temper discipline with individual freedom. It will seek, moreover, to lead the individual, as far and as fast as possible, out of his immaturity, where discipline must be largely imposed, toward greater and greater maturity, where the individual becomes progressively more and more self-disciplined. The liberally oriented school will do its best to help its students take charge of their own education as rapidly as they are able to do so and to realize that, in the last analysis, everyone must educate himself. This realization, in turn, will lead the student to the further discovery that real education is not only self-directed and self-motivated but that it is also a life-long process. While real education must be initiated and supervised by others during the individual's formative years, it cannot be completed in any academic program, however prolonged; rather, it should continue throughout life as an activity which is intrinsically satisfying and which is absolutely essential to continued intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth.

Finally, the school, if it is itself enlightened and mature, will do its best to make the student's total school experience an introduction to "existential" living. It will strenuously resist the common belief that school is merely a prelude to "life" and that "life" really begins at graduation. It will seek to make the student's multiple experiences, in class and out of class, as vital and meaningful as possible, in the confident hope that such experiences will lead to ever more poignant and significant experiences in later life. It will also try to equip the student with a philosophy of life, or at least with a way of reflecting upon life and its possibilities, that will enhance rather than diminish his natural zest for life and that will help, not hinder, his spontaneous search for meanings and purposes worthy of his highest loyalties. It will strive, in short, to help each individual student acquire, in terms of his own ability and background, the most realistic attitude toward the many hazards and creative possibilities of human existence.

This help will, of course, include "vocational" guidance as well as "liberal" instruction. The enlightened school will recognize the

value of specialized skills in our highly industrialized and competitive society, and it will make every effort to help its students discover their own aptitudes and limitations and to acquire the vocational skills for which they are best suited. But it will simultaneously try to help its students to think of this or that vocation not merely, or even primarily, as a money-making device but also, and essentially, as a way of serving the community. It will, in short, seek to cultivate in them a "professional" attitude, that is, an attitude in which the satisfactions of congenial and creative work and of genuine service to mankind are the dominant satisfactions. This approach implies not a cleavage between "life" and "work," or between a "good life" and a "good living," but rather a realistic and healthy amalgamation of *both* concerns, each of which is, in its own way, of such crucial importance to all of us.

### *The School and Society*

No one of our major institutions is as dependent upon the state as is the school, and none has a higher responsibility to the society to which it belongs. This is particularly true of the school in a free society, for such a society must depend upon it, more than upon any other of its institutions, to educate its people for citizenship and social responsibility.

The school's first responsibility to a free society is to teach its students the basic structure and essential processes of a democratic community and, so far as possible, to infuse in them a life-long respect for, and devotion to, our precious freedoms and everything that contributes to their continuance and enhancement. Its primary task in this area is to give them a genuine understanding of popular self-government under law and of the ultimate rights and duties of every man, woman, and child in a self-governing nation. Above all, it is obligated to try to generate in them a lively sense of civic and political responsibility which will motivate and direct their social activities in whatever walk of life they eventually find themselves.

The school's second social responsibility is to try to cultivate in its students an enduring realization that there is nothing sacrosanct or absolute in any form of social and political democracy, including our own; that every document we revere, including our own Con-

stitution, is ~~itself finite and fallible~~—the creation of wise and resourceful men and, it may well be, superior to any comparable covenant in human history, but nevertheless subject, in principle, to further revision and improvement by an evolving and maturing liberal society; and that our particular form of democracy, with its separation of powers and its many legal and legislative processes which have served us so well for so many years, is, nonetheless, not necessarily the only, or the best, political expression of the democratic faith, for other nations or even for our own. Our students should learn in school, once and for all, that honest criticism of anything in our social order is not only legal but desirable, that minority opinions must be respected in a free society even if they do not eventually prevail, and that our corporate search for social justice and political wisdom is promoted, not retarded or jeopardized, by public and private debate on all controversial issues.

The last, and in many ways the highest, responsibility of the school in our "land of the free" is the inculcation in its students, from the youngest to the oldest, of a passionate concern for social justice and a profound hatred of all forms of social exploitation and oppression, both at home and abroad. No free society can preserve its self-respect if it becomes indifferent and callous to the multiple injustices that are bound to arise in every society. And we, in this country, will not be able to preserve our own basic rights and freedoms unless we really believe that they are simultaneously the rights and freedoms which men should possess, as human beings, throughout the globe. We can hope to maintain our respect for one another only so long as we cultivate in ourselves a similar respect for all men, even the most unfortunate, and only so long as we do whatever we can to improve their human lot. Our humanitarianism, if it is to be vital, must be world-wide in scope. Truly to love and cherish our own nation, we must respect the legitimate aspirations of other nations. If we would have peace and prosperity in our time, and in our children's time, we must co-operate wholeheartedly with all other nations who are willing to co-operate with us for a world order productive of such prosperity and such enduring peace. All this the school, committed to the liberal faith, is under solemn obligation to infuse into the hearts and minds of each of its students as early, completely, and enduringly as it possibly can.

### *The School and Religion*

I have already expressed my deep conviction that the school should encourage in all its students that "ultimate concern for the Ultimate" which, in Professor Paul Tillich's phrase, constitutes the heart of religion. So defined, a man's working religion is identical with his highest loyalty and with the utmost seriousness of which he is capable; the irreligious attitude, according to this standard, is a cynical, or a hopeless, repudiation of all ultimate seriousness and final loyalty. Whatever else the school, public or private, may or may not attempt in the area of religion, it can and should at least do its best to persuade its students to take life seriously and to search strenuously for something worthy of their complete and absolute allegiance.

But even the tax-supported school should, I believe, go further than this in religious instruction. Particularly in our society, which has been so profoundly moulded by our great Hebraic-Christian tradition, the school should give all its students a chance to learn what this tradition is and what it is that characterizes the chief contemporary variants of the Hebrew and Christian faiths. They should also be introduced to humanism at its courageous and inspiring best, and they should learn to understand, and to respect, honest religious doubt and skepticism. They should, in short, be introduced to the great alternative ways of conceiving of, and responding to, ultimate reality which sincere and able people in our society are embracing and testing out in their daily lives. How else can the growing and maturing youth be really free to choose for himself that historical faith by which, in his most reflective moments, he would wish to live?

It may seem strange that I, who sincerely and openly profess the Christian faith as modern liberal Protestantism defines it, should not advocate the teaching of this faith alone. The answer is not far to seek. As a teacher in a genuinely liberal university I do everything in my power to give my students as adequate an understanding of this faith as I can, and I do not hesitate to express, on all appropriate occasions, my wholehearted commitment to these beliefs and this way of life. But I can do so with a good liberal *and Christian* conscience only because many of my colleagues, as sincere as I am and many of them far more able and far better informed than I, are as



free as I am to expound a very different faith and to confess their equally wholehearted loyalty to it. This state of affairs is, I believe, specifically dictated by the liberal philosophy which I have been advocating in this essay. However persuaded I am of the truth of the Christian Gospel as I conceive of it, I am equally persuaded that I, and all other men, my church and all other churches, are finite and fallible; that my truth and my church's truth, however inspired, must inevitably fall short of the whole truth in all its length and depth; and, above all, that it is man's basic freedom and responsibility to stand on his own feet, to make his own decisions and his own mistakes, in short, to seek for God and worship Him in his own way, or, at his own mortal risk, to eschew this search and worship lesser gods of his own contrivance.

This is why I have argued that the school should scrupulously maintain an attitude of official neutrality on this, as on all other, controversial matters. This neutrality should not, however, be confused with neglect or indifference. Religion should not be ignored; on the contrary, it should be studied and discussed, in its Far Eastern forms as well as in its more familiar Hebraic and Christian forms. It should be studied and taught, however, always in the liberal spirit of honest inquiry followed by free individual decision. The one and only attitude that should be deliberately inculcated in our students is the attitude of profound concern for whatever can give meaning and value to human life and of profound respect for all sincerely and openly held ultimate beliefs, however much they may differ from our own.

If this interpretation of liberalism is felt by anyone to be unchristian, I must be judged to be, first and foremost, a liberal and, secondarily, a Christian heretic. All I can offer in self-defense is that the liberalism which I have here attempted to expound and defend is, I sincerely believe, completely consistent with the authentic spirit of Christianity. As a Christian I would, indeed, go much further than I have thought it proper to go in this sketch of my philosophy of education, for, as a Christian, I do believe that all objective value and, indeed, all of reality is rooted in God, and that this God is in fact the only and the ultimate source of human redemption. A school which forbids the bold and enthusiastic teaching of this faith, along with other faiths, is, I believe, culpably obscurantist and illiberal; but

a school which seeks to indoctrinate its students with this faith would, in my judgment, ~~be a sectarian and not a truly liberal educational institution.~~ There is a place, I fully agree, for such sectarian schools in our free society; but the liberalism to which our democracy is dedicated and to which I, for one, believe authentic Christianity to be committed *must* be taught and exemplified in truly liberal academic communities, both independent and tax-supported, at all the educational levels. It should be the highest responsibility of all such liberal institutions, I repeat, to open all doors to our youth and to see to it that there are sincere and able teachers available who can lead our young people to these doors and far enough through them to enable them to comprehend what lies over the threshold, so that they themselves may, in due course, be really free to select a faith to live by as responsible moral agents.

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## CHAPTER V

### *An Experimentalist Approach to Education\**

GEORGE R. GEIGER

#### *Introduction*

Terminology may or may not be important here. Yet, in preferring "experimentalist" to "pragmatic," it should be noted that the name "pragmatism" has not really been philosophically useful, except for purposes of abuse, since the death of William James. John Dewey himself, in his *Logic* (1938, deprecated the term, at least as a noun, because of all the misconceptions which had become attached to it. Even the more recent label of "instrumentalism" already has fallen out of favor, again because of the connotations which decades of earnest effort have been unable to remove, connotations which are vulgar and almost wilfully persistent. Whether "experimentalism" has any better chance of resisting misinterpretation still remains an open question.

A second preliminary may also be quickly mentioned. Whatever may be the final judgment about the educational philosophy of Dewey and his followers, there can be no question of the stimulating effect that controversies over the "progressive" position have had upon academic philosophy, even to the point of provoking a desperate return to the Middle Ages. Despite the severity of this kind of remedy, it has been healthy for philosophers to begin to lose the patronizing attitude so often aroused in them by any mention of professional "education." That education provides the final testing ground for even the most abstruse and technical hypotheses of academic philosophy may seem an overstatement, but only if "education" is artificially restricted and caricaturishly portrayed. In any event, it is an auspicious occasion when philosophers are willing to

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conspire together over the mundane concerns of teaching and learning.

### *Basic Orientation*

(It is not easy to determine where to begin a concise exposition of experimentalism. Certainly at least two basic questions must be briefly developed: the theories of knowledge and of value. These are central for both the philosophy itself and for its educational implications; fortunately, the two theories are joined, making economy of exposition both possible and relevant.)

(If there is any word-symbol which can represent the general attitude behind the experimentalist approach to knowledge and value it is *continuity*, or, in Dewey's more recent vocabulary, *transaction*. Indeed, that there is a "problem" of knowledge or of value is itself indicative of some kind of *discontinuity*. The classic dualism between an antiseptic and ultimate reality, waiting to be known, and a sentient mind, all ready to infect that reality and distort it into appearance, is, of course, almost a definition of discontinuity. Disclosure of the world to a spectator somehow outside it but willing to be shown provides the raw material for the resulting epistemological industry. Without a gap between the world and the knower, there is no *general* problem of knowledge, or, rather, of knowledge *in general*.)

To account for the plausibility of a paralyzing dualism such as this would go far beyond the scope of the present essay. But, in an admittedly peremptory fashion, one might suggest that classic philosophy inherited a form of cultural schizophrenia, and then proceeded to rationalize it on nearly every level of discourse—metaphysical, moral, epistemological, religious, to go no further. The etiology of that schizophrenia will depend naturally on one's philosophy of history. But whether the dualism be attributed to class structure, or to the incidence of political power, or to religious charism, or to the rise of science and technology against a background of magic, or to even subtler contrasts afforded by climate, sex, or whatever—there is little question that some general reason must be found for the tradition which divides fact from value, body from mind, matter from form, the world from the knower (and even the curriculum from the pupil). A sociology of dualism would seem indicated to

account for the perverse divisiveness which men have continually introduced into their lives. In any case, the traditional problem of knowledge seems a particularly apt illustration of it, a kind of rake's progress.

It is a little strange that epistemology has exercised the fascination that it has. After all, the net result of the difficulties labeled epistemological would be to cast so grave a suspicion upon "knowledge in general" that any specific act of knowing would logically collapse. This is perhaps why the scientist has consistently refused to be impressed by a problem of knowledge. His context of knowing or inquiry is fixed by a particular problem or set of problems (whether theoretical or applied), and therefore the most fruitful assumptions in science are designed to integrate, not to separate, problem and solution. There are problems of knowledge, of course, but they are not "epistemological," that is, not those of trying to get an already separated subjective knower and objective world together again; they are contextual problems, those concerned with initiating and directing a series of inquiries called into existence by difficulties to be overcome. Significant knowledge about an atom or a star, a human mind or a social system, a jellyfish, or the history of your country is not achieved by arresting the inquiry at the very start on grounds of first-degree epistemology. Whether we can ever actually see an atom or experience another's mind or feel as a jellyfish does or be on the shores waiting for Columbus may be fascinating questions; but they do not preclude the growth of knowledge about these things. And such knowledge is in every case different from what the spectator theory assumes,<sup>1</sup> for it is knowledge which depends on actions and operations like those of Wilson cloud chambers, Geiger counters, spectroscopes, sphygmographs, statistical indices, documentary analysis, and thousands of other entries to knowledge, entries totally unlike the otiose contemplations basic to classic theories of knowledge.

This is a bare outline of an approach to knowledge different from that presented by the spectator theories of traditional philosophy. It is an approach not intended to be simply one more example of

1. A development of this entire argument will be found in George R. Geiger, *Philosophy and the Social Order*, chap. v, especially pp. 144ff. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1947.

a dialectic or a rhetoric. [An experimentalist interpretation of knowledge is instead a description of the way problems are actually solved, above all by scientific method] and it reveals a number of assumptions, all of them diverging sharply from those which underlie knowledge in its more honorific aspect. For example, the spectator theory of knowledge presupposes a given and fixed reality that, as it were, waits to be uncovered. Knowledge thus becomes, as Dewey phrased it, a quest for certainty, for final revelation of an eternal and unchanging world. But an experimentalist or contextualistic theory needs no such assumption. To solve a problem means in some way to alter the situation which has set the problem; a transformation of the subject matter of experience becomes compulsory. The assumption of an aloof and inscrutable reality standing off from the human onlooker and teasing him would void the very meaning of experimentation, just as it has tended to define "experience" solely in terms of the passive and the "mental." But experience is in fact the result of an active co-operation between knower and the known, in which manipulation, change, and control take the place of the mere looking that is so conspicuous in traditional epistemology. Knowing is operational, not simply a beholding. Every laboratory is a scene of action. Thumping, pulling, squeezing, stretching (however refined and subtle they may become), not to mention downright hammering, are as integral a part of the experimental process as is the most exquisite of pointer-readings. The very pattern of the experiment makes the age-old distinctions between certain and uncertain, matter and mind, object and subject blurred and less plausible. The chasm separating knower from the known seems less forbidding.

A similar repudiation of discontinuity can be reached in ways other than those of methodology. One way would be that of taking organic evolution seriously. Antinaturalists (say, Mortimer Adler) show a shrewd instinct when they attempt a bold, desperate, and direct challenge of the evolutionary hypothesis, even on (allegedly) scientific grounds not simply on those of metaphysics and theology. For if the implications of evolution are securely grasped, and this does not always happen, the very foundations of dualism are cut away. To take evolution seriously is to accept biological continuity. And this means, among other things, that the live creature is not

divided from its environment in some irrecoverable fashion, that conscious experience and nature are not antithetical, that knowledge is a matter of vital participation in a world of which it is a part rather than the idle glances of a disinterested and outside watcher. To take evolution seriously (and how else can we take it?) is to be a naturalist: To be a naturalist is to see man, his works, and his values as a great transaction going on within the world and not outside it—as a transaction, not a “reduction.” For one of the tragic misunderstandings of modern naturalism has been to equate it with old-fashioned materialism and mechanism, or even with Bertrand Russell’s “free man” who, in his worship, celebrates the meaninglessness of the universe. But to regard the universe as completely alien to man and his hopes seems as much of a small-boy attitude as to find in it nothing but plums and goodies. Certainly it is an attitude which fragments and disconnects the world; therefore, it cannot be genuinely naturalistic, nor can it be reconciled with the continuity demonstrated by evolution.

Now, what does all this add up to? What generalizations about knowledge can be made on the basis of the above theoretical approach? The following items<sup>2</sup> may indicate quickly how a naturalistic and necessarily *relativistic* theory of knowledge will have consequences differing sharply from those entailed by a static spectator theory: (a) knowledge can be neither discovery nor disclosure of an aloof and already predetermined existence, for the very nature of knowing depends upon a *joint* achievement of organism and environment; (b) so, the knower, as well as the perceived environment, is part of his knowledge; (c) individual differences in knowledge among men can be detected and controlled, eliminated or prized; but the general human element in all knowledge can be neither isolated nor eliminated; (d) scientific knowledge is relative to knowers in specific contexts; (e) thus, what something may be when totally independent of any observer or frame of reference is a scientifically meaningless question, for knowledge is a *transaction*.

It will have been evident now that we have been slipping from a theory of knowledge to one of value. This has not been inadvertent. The two concepts must join; if not, then the greatest of discontinuities will still face us, that between morals and tech-

2. Suggested to me by my consultant, Professor Thomas.

nology. The gap between what men know and what they want as good, between an understanding of nature and the ethical application of that understanding is, of course, so incandescent in these nuclear days that awareness of it has become banal and journalistic—but no less frightening for that. If experimentalism prides itself on continuity (and regards it as something more than a magic talisman), then it must address itself above all to a naturalistic explanation of value. In fact, this is what John Dewey was doing for more than two generations.

To find an entry into a naturalistic and experimentalist theory of value is not difficult. For one thing, there are the “metaphysical” assumptions noted in a preceding page, the assumptions demanded by evolutionary continuity. If, like evolution, naturalism is to be taken seriously, values must be closely related to the world in which man finds himself. One kind of relationship may be disclosed by what is almost a pun, the double meaning of the word “end.” On the morally honorific level, ends are goals, goods, purposes, preferred outcomes, telic factors, values. But ends are also endings, finalities, closures, stops, finis. Is the connection between the terms only a pun?

An attempted answer to that question would begin with the recognition that natural processes do start and stop. Almost any example would serve to disclose the pulsation and rhythm constituting organic (and inorganic) continuity. The cycles of the days and the seasons, of waking and sleeping, of the crops and of life and death themselves; the ebb and flow of the waters and the moon and the blood; the very rhythm and pulse that we proceed to call atom or even curve and number—these could be extended to include almost the definition of nature. These processes are, of course, serial, so that endings are not necessarily forever, although they may be. A natural end, then, is a pause—great or small—where an event comes to a period, or at least to a semicolon.

What has this to do with ends as values, as goals or goods? Is naturalism but a new name for teleology, i.e., for an underlying purposiveness in the world? Such an interpretation would undoubtedly be extreme and unacceptable—*unless* the transactional relationship of the live creature to its environment be explored as fully as it can be. If that is done, then the beginnings and endings of events, the series of natural affairs, are found to involve *both* phases of the



transaction: man, one part of nature, is implicated in other parts of nature. Some of these beginnings and endings favor his activities, others do not. The rhythms of nature are what they are: to man they can be beneficial, neutral, harmful. To regard *all* of natural processes as exclusively good or bad or supremely indifferent is blatantly anthropomorphic: To regard man—himself a natural process, evolving and growing in a world not made *for* him, yet not made to thwart him in some conspiratorial fashion—as a dynamic, interacting factor, choosing among the other serial events around him in order to survive and develop, is to discover why some natural endings *become* “ends in view” and others “ends to be rejected,” i.e., values and disvalues. Men must choose. As they do, the *process* of evaluation becomes established, a process no less a part of the natural world than any other.

If this is not convincing, another approach may be suggested. Traditional philosophy, hypnotized by the discontinuous charms of a theory of knowledge, has tended to attribute a surdish character (even an absurd one) to *qualities*, say, like color, or pleasure, or beauty, which have been labelled “secondary” and “tertiary,” a status indicating their degree of removal from reality with its “primary” nature of solidity, form, extension. Thus, a dualistic epistemology has forced into a mental, private, and “merely” subjective realm the very qualities which men are most likely to seek or reject, those immediate qualities without which a definition of value becomes impossible. In short, just as the spectator theory of knowledge finds it baffling to explain why the world needs to be copied in the first place, so the parallel theory of value finds it equally baffling to account for the appearance of qualities like sound, beauty, and desire when, allegedly, they are not out there waiting to be copied. They must perforce come from some defect in man’s perceiving mirror. Contrary to this, a consistently naturalistic philosophy must recognize, to quote Dewey, that “empirically, things are poignant, tragic, beautiful, humorous, settled, disturbed, comfortable, annoying, barren, harsh, consoling, splendid, fearful; are such immediately and in their own right and behalf.” Any other interpretation presents that familiar cleavage of nature (and culture) which divides irretrievably hard things from soft qualities, thereby making all consummatory experience suspect, inexplicable, and unnatural.

What we have been trying to say, then, if only in a necessarily

abbreviated and elliptical way, is something like this: (a) A philosophy of naturalism must regard values, like man himself, as part of the continuous flow and process constituting nature. (b) Values are to be found when, among the natural rhythms, among the beginnings and endings of events, man makes his choices. (c) His choices are, of course, successful only as they help to adapt his behavior to the natural order. (d) However, that natural order is not something alien and obdurate and completely qualityless. The closures of nature—whether or not they are congenial to men—are as final, ultimate, and immediate (in the aesthetic sense) as the consummatory experiences men seek and call “ends in view” or “ends in themselves.”

This approach to a theory of value, as noted earlier, has been from a “metaphysical” angle and has been suggested as the logical complement of both evolutionary continuity and continuity of knowledge. Other experimentalist approaches to value could be explored, especially those involving methodology, but perhaps they may become apparent as we turn now to specific educational problems. Likewise, other forms of continuity, as in psychology of learning, may also disclose themselves. For if there is anything of merit which an experimentalist philosophy can contribute to the educational process it will be found in the constant challenge to discontinuities. In education, as in philosophy, problems are manufactured when what is naturally integrated becomes artificially severed and therefore mutilated.

### *Aims and Values of Education*

(Education in the broadest sense can be nothing less than the changes made in human beings by their experience.) Whether such changes carry ethical implications is a nice question depending on the degree of the direction of change and the possibility of control over it. When, however, the more limited and more usual denotation of education is intended—the deliberate change in the experience and conduct of persons (chiefly, but not necessarily, young persons) engineered by an organized and conscious group—the moral implications are indeed staggering. They include not only the subjects, sometimes the victims, of the process but the initiators as well, since nothing presents so clear a challenge to a vested group as the opportunity to educate or to indoctrinate others. The overwhelming social significance of education can be located partly in this com-

pulsory self-examination of the educator. There is no escaping the conclusion that education is a moral affair, that it is pre-eminently a value enterprise.

Now, a statement like this does not pretend to imply anything sanctified. The word "value"—and cognate terms like "end," "standard," or "aim"—so often suggest qualities calculated to arouse respectful attention, e.g., absolute, fixed, not to say transcendental; but in line with our earlier attempted location of "end" within a natural ongoing process, such connotations are not allowable. For if values are the results of human choices made in a transaction involving the live creature *and* its environment, then their character must be found in that context and cannot legitimately be imposed from outside. An absolute, whether it be a value or anything else, means that which is outside any context. In a discussion of value, if not elsewhere, that kind of insulated and aloof position is peculiarly awkward. Indeed, any *single* standard for judging human choices, even a naturalistic and contextualistic one, will also find itself in difficulty.

Take, for example, the general criterion of survival by way of adaptation. Certainly there can be no question that without taking this into account nothing human has much meaning. Yet as the sole factor in constituting value, survival may well be a necessary condition but is hardly a sufficient *single* condition, since survival can be achieved in many ways. A similar demurrer can be addressed to another claimant to be the sole determiner of (naturalistic) value, the well-worn concept of "happiness." But, in the words of John Dewey:

If we still wish to make our peace with the past, and to sum up the plural and changing goods of life in a single word, doubtless the term *happiness* is the one most apt. But we should exchange free morals for sterile metaphysics, if we imagine that "happiness" is any less unique than the individuals who experience it; any less complex than the constitution of their capacities, or any less variable than the objects upon which their capacities are directed.<sup>3</sup>

Happiness means all things to all men and, consequently, cannot serve as an analytic term in ethics.

3. John Dewey, *Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays*, pp. 69-70. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1910.

Is the same true of "intelligence"? Here, of course, is the key word in the experimentalist philosophy. Can it also operate as the determining element in defining value? The question is particularly important, since traditional value theory tends to underplay the role of intelligence, substituting for it something which can be regarded only as a variety of revelation, intuition, or a specialized moral sense. This problem of drawing a fine line between underestimating the function of intelligence, on the one hand, and elevating it out of all proportion, on the other, is a basic one, and it is unfortunate that a discussion of it cannot develop beyond the following allotted lines.

To put it abruptly, intelligence is a quality of an act and should be understood as an adverb or an adjective rather than as a noun. It is the quality of discovering the connections behind our behavior and the consequences of that behavior. It is the quality that cements what otherwise would be fragmented parts of our experience and achieves a continuity and unity of experience without which man would simply not be man. This quality has been so typically and characteristically human, so clearly the differential which gives man his unique place in nature, that from Aristotle on it has been classically delineated as the *summum bonum*. Dewey himself has more than once celebrated so glowingly this attribute of intelligence (or reflective thinking, or critical inquiry, or reasoning, or whatever other term may be congenial) that not without cause has it come to be regarded as the core of the experimentalist theory of value.<sup>4</sup>

However, it would be a serious mistake to interpret the experimentalist interest in critical intelligence as simply an adding of one more item to the eternal catalogue of absolute goods. It is no hypostatized "Intelligence" which is worshiped, no "end in itself." To repeat, intelligence is the quality of relating ongoing activities to "ends in view"; "it" is never outside a context. Now, this should not lead to a misconception at the opposite extreme, i.e., that intelligence is "merely" a means to some ulterior goal. This misses the point because it assumes that ends and means are indeed separable. Without attempting to argue the matter, it may be stated baldly that to separate means from end is as sensible as to separate cause from effect.

4. A further discussion of intelligence and reflective thinking will be found *infra*, pp. 154-62.

In either case the transaction involved can be broken apart for analytical reasons but not otherwise. Indeed, the breaking of end from means is but one more example of the dualism that has plagued modern philosophy. There are vital distinctions here, to be sure, but instead of being between ends and means they are "between those modes of practice that are not intelligent, not inherently and immediately enjoyable, and those which are full of enjoyed meanings."<sup>5</sup>

In short, decisive as critical intelligence is in giving a unique character to human activity, it still provides no *single* criterion for value. For human ends are plural, just as are human wants. This must be one of our primitive notions, one of our basic assumptions. Any other assumption would be to the effect of taking out of its context some solitary human consummation and arbitrarily elevating it as of supreme moment. There would be nothing new in such a procedure. In fact, that procedure could almost be regarded as a definition of morals. But it is a procedure that helps to make meaningless the richness and variety which define experience, if not morals, and it has consequently contributed in giving "morals" the unctuous flavor so hard to overcome.

That an approach like this lends itself to obvious misunderstanding and still more obvious censure—very probably both—goes without saying. All that can be done here is to suggest flatly and without adornment two lines of thought which may help correct the familiar charges so easily aroused by a position like this, charges such as that it provides nothing stable on which to base either ethics or education, that it must lead to a vicious relativity if not moral anarchy, that without standards either absolute or approaching it the way is open to justify any kind of activity however bizarre or perverse. One of the lines of thought intended to answer these objections will return us to the role of intelligence as a process of freeing and directing men's activities. These activities, we have insisted, are plural. However, we still intend to take evolution seriously. If that is done, then the concept of *growth* emerges, a concept (even if it be a familiar one) central to the experimentalist philosophy of value and of education. Now, if there is genuine meaning in the phrase "end in itself,"

5. John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 358. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1926. It should be added that Dewey's *Art and Experience* is a brilliant development of what he intends by "enjoyed meanings."

then for education as well as for all life such an end must tie up with the concept of continuous growth. Actually the phrase has little real meaning, since no end can be divorced from the means which achieve it, just as no effect can be an effect without a cause. This is indeed why the idea of growth is a central one, for it almost automatically cuts across any block between ends and means. Growth cannot be a means to any ulterior end except more growth; the same holds for life itself, and for education. The very concepts of life and growth imply continuity. They are teleological only in this sense of continuity—which is exactly what evolution means. Nor is it a cogent objection to say that some particular kind of growth or of life or education is morally preferable to another as an end. Such an objection would indicate that the whole point has been missed. For the growth and life and education which are being underlined in an approach like this are assumed to be full and symmetrical. It is partial and distorted growth alone which must be rejected. Education for crime or for sadistic persecution means growth which checks other growth in both the individual and the group; life, that is parasitic is the frustration of other life. Growth must signify growth in general, a continuum of growth.

The second line of thought is in opposition to (at least the naïve interpretation of) cultural relativism. That human wants are plural does not preclude a sociopsychological uniformity among them nor the establishment of the public and experimentally determined basic conditions necessary for their fulfilment. The idea of shared, interpersonal behavior has become almost the hallmark of modern psychology. To say that no *single* criterion of value can be set up is *not* to say that there can be only moral anarchy and that anything goes. The integrating and transactional concepts of biopsychic growth and of the sociopsychological field point the way to value criteria, plural but not nihilistic. This whole area is fast becoming one of the most fruitful in psychological and anthropological research, the significant work in values by Kluckhohn and his associates at Harvard being only one of many examples.

### *Experimentalist Approach to Educational Problems*

A discussion like this of what may be called the general nature of values or ends demands illustration, not simply to make it specific

but actually to help define the position. The following several applications, then, to educational problems are not of the order of trying out a recipe but rather of helping to formulate certain observations about pluralism, growth, and the use of intelligence.

*Changing Conceptions of Means and Ends in Education.* Certainly one obvious area of application has been the modern history of educational experiment based, as it has clearly been, on the presupposition that education must be free to change. Commonplace as this may sound and overworked as the modish term "dynamic" may be, the concept of educational flexibility and the innumerable ways in which it has helped to reconstruct the school in the last half-century, stand as testimony to a truly revolutionary cultural force—"revolutionary" because it has been a demonstration against the hypnotic power of absolute, monolithic aims and methods. That a desperate counterrevolution is now in progress can hardly have been unexpected.

This does not imply that other philosophies of education do not accept change, too; nor does it mean that experimentalism any more than other philosophies would settle for change just for the sake of change, any old change. What would seem crucial here, as in the preceding discussion of value, is where the change is to be located. It would seem evident that traditional views of education (and philosophy) limit change to means only. This seems clearly indicated by familiar talk about "closing the gap," "holding up standards," "going back to fundamentals." But experimentalism cannot see this clean dichotomy between ends and means. "Ends in view," when reached, become means in a continuing serial process. "Ends in view" that can *never* be reached but function only as absolute, unattainable ideals would seem at best Pickwickian. Change can be controlled and meaningful only if ends, like means, are free to change. Any other interpretation is but reaffirmation of the very discontinuity that experimentalism is pledged to challenge.

*Democracy in Education.* Equally revolutionary and equally consistent with the philosophy of intelligently directed pluralistic growth is the assumption that all men and women are educable. Not educable in exactly the same way: They do not all have to become, for example, obscure disciples of Saint Thomas. Education signifies growth, the development and socializing of human capacities. It goes

far beyond simply the acquiring of intellectual graces; it is certainly not confined to formal training and the school. Human capacities will differ in quality and quantity, but each individual, this assumption would maintain, must be given full opportunity to exploit himself and his environment so that he actually does grow. If not, there is a break in evolutionary continuity and human powers are unnaturally deflected. Indeed, this is not a new assumption at all, but rather a corollary or an extension of the still more basic premise of continuity, for educability here can mean only the full and symmetrical development of the human forces evolution has thrown into action. Were men regarded as fundamentally uneducable, then organic discontinuity should be our fundamental concept.

The opportunities for growth will not be found just lying around. A passive, laissez-faire attitude on the part of society toward the opportunities which alone can bring about all-over human growth is dangerously shortsighted. The stimuli to human development have to be actively and deliberately provided. Which means more than universal literacy, even at the high-school level. It means, to be specific, that no one be prevented by financial reasons alone from continuing his formal education at the college and university level. At least half of the best-equipped high-school graduates cannot now afford to continue their education.

But an education directed by the strategy of providing opportunities to enlarge the life of the common man must go far beyond even universal liberal education for all who are capable of it<sup>6</sup> and far beyond the idea merely of providing leaders. It must develop, among other directions, along the lines of "adult education," a phrase which conceals in a casual and elliptical way the most electric of qualities. There is dynamite in the idea that the education (growth) of the adult is limited only by his needs and his capacities. Among his biological and social wants are the satisfaction of curiosity, the sense of accomplishment, the feel of creativeness, the need for self-expression—in a word, the entire expansion of consciousness. So often these wants are now deflected into bizarre and stultifying vulgarities precisely because "education" has abdicated in favor of radio and television. Not by leisure but by the cultivation of leisure can men grow. Therefore, education for the citizen must aim to enrich the

6. This topic of liberal education will be returned to in the following section.



free time that the march of technology seems to promise (assuming, of course, the gradual solution of basic economic and political questions). This is not to be interpreted as regimentation or discipline or some first devious step to cultural totalitarianism. What is intended here is that men must be granted at least the chance to employ their free time creatively and fruitfully and not be delivered by default to the tender mercies of comic strip and pulp fiction, soap operas, gigantic orgies of professionalized sports and entertainment, all presided over by the advertising impressario. Instead, encouragement of artistic talents, appreciation of great music and literature, introduction to the fascination of science and philosophy, cultivation of hobbies, training in the handicrafts—these are but a sample of the paths possible, and already being traversed by the more enlightened labor unions, municipal adult-education centers, university extension services, not to mention the whole tradition of the folk-school movement. Whether government at the national level in this country will be allowed to contribute to this kind of development is a moot question. It will be remembered that the depression of the 1930's saw the experiment of various government-sponsored WPA art projects, including the beginnings of a federal theater. It was a tragedy of no small dimension that this whole idea was finally abandoned, not simply because it was a frill but because, in some peculiar manner, it seemed a menace to the American way of life.

It is revolutionary to regard people, all people, as educable. The kind of education required depends on their needs and wants, on what is lacking in their all-round symmetrical growth. Promoting that growth would, indeed, be democracy in education.

*The Meaning of Liberal Education.* There is, moreover, a special category of educability which has come in for an almost extravagant amount of attention in recent years. It is that of "liberal" education, especially at the college and university level. I say "extravagant" because the discussion has sometimes had the effect of suggesting that this is the only kind of education worth discussing (which is no more than a conceit of college professors). Even to broach the topic is to risk being inundated, and at the very outset, for the definition of liberal education is itself the issue. Taking the risk, we can ask: If the "liberated" individual is the aim of liberal (liberating) education, what is he free from and what is he

free for? That he be free of the closed mind, of the intolerance of ignorance, and of the dominance of the specious present would seem obvious to the point of banality. But that he be free to change present society because he can observe it critically and from a historical perspective, change it in the direction of providing those conditions without which a liberated individual cannot grow and realize his capacities—this may seem irrelevant, at least to the purist. Yet experimentalism would have to settle for some such interpretation of the place of liberal education in our culture.<sup>7</sup> For if change, educability, and growth are the basic concepts in all education, then that area called “liberal”—indeed, *especially* because it is called liberal—cannot be set off on some island alone.

Nor can liberal education be simply content with efforts to preserve the past; it must take the lead in understanding, criticizing, and directing cultural change. That knowledge of the past contributes mightily to an understanding of the present is indubitable, and the present interpretation takes full account of it. But that the past be cultivated for its own sake is something else again. It is present culture, not past, which is our problem. This does not signify that the more conservative view of liberal education is unconcerned with present-day problems. But it would appear that the specter of discontinuity haunts the traditionalist here as elsewhere. Apparently he would prepare the adolescent by steeping him in historical materials of classic dimensions, and in the grand style, and then turn him loose, as an adult, on modern problems. The experimentalist reverses the emphasis and uses contemporary issues that demand drawing on the thought and experience of the past, hoping thereby to maintain historical and logical continuity. To illustrate, it was their own “present culture” that produced the Great Books which, we are advised in some circles, must now constitute the core of liberal education; but it is concentration on “needed change in the world” which will now produce more great books. To argue that the study of Great Books is the *only* way contemporary questions can be understood and met is, at best, pedantry and, at worst (as in the obscurantism of Mortimer Adler), a bald apologia for medieval theology.

7. For a development of this argument, see the stimulating treatment in A. D. Henderson's *Vitalizing Liberal Education*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1944.

The directing of liberal education toward the solution of contemporary problems can be regarded as limited or illiberal only if those problems are misunderstood. For "contemporary problems" include nothing less than war and peace, i.e., extinction or survival, as well as the extension of a democratic ethic, the place of scientific intelligence in solving problems, the development of aesthetic appreciation as far as man's capacities will allow, the scrutiny of economic and political institutions—the horizons are unlimited. These are not "social problems" in some parochial sense. They are comprehensive enough to include even a discussion of the function of the humanities! But to circumscribe liberal education by refusing it any other office than that of considering the place of the classics is a crippling limitation. It would be turned toward the cultivation of "gentlemen" in the invidious sense.

That concern with the present is illiberal is of a piece with the idea that "vocational" education presents the grand antithesis: Here is the illiberal bogey always available for drubbing. Now, it is very easy to sneer at the alleged vocationalizing of much modern education. Lofty contempt for practical subjects is the watermark of too many self-defined scholars. The examples chosen are calculated to get a laugh—pie-making, camp leadership, window-cleaning, pre-pharmacy, salesmanship. Certainly there will be no apology here for the evident abuses of overvocationalism in many sections of present-day education. But to assume that training for making a living has no place in liberal education is to assume that education has no context. It is to make the pleasantly superior assumption that college is a place to spend four happy years immaculately preserved from contamination with the outside, a sort of unruptured chrysalis in which ivy can be enjoyed, green lawns trod, and precious books read, a refuge and vacation from a naughty world. It is also to assume that preparation for the law,<sup>8</sup> for selling bonds, for literary pursuits, for private preparatory-school teaching, or for corporation management is somehow *not* vocational. Veblen could find no better example of invidious comparison than this!

Genuine vocational education goes far beyond the caricaturish limitations imposed on it by the educational elite and by the "gen-

8. Preliminary studies of recent graduates of the college that teaches only the Great Books seem to indicate that the boys favor law schools when they get out.

teel tradition." From the earliest years of an individual through the latest ones to be served by an expanding program of adult education, there can be a "vocational" approach which will exploit every possible device for making men think, for making them sensitive to authentic and imperative problems, for enriching the making of a living so that it becomes more than a casually neglected instrument. This enlargement will unquestionably employ great books—but they will be fitted into a situation and will not carry their situation around with them as a turtle does its house.

### *The Educational Processes: Motivation and Methods*

The preceding discussion skirted, but only with great difficulty, the place of "thinking" in liberal education. When one talks about the aims and values of education, especially higher education, it is impossible not to consider at the same time the role played by the cultivation of "intelligence," "critical inquiry," "reason," as such an aim or value. Nor would it be possible to enter any kind of caveat or veto when such legitimately praiseworthy terms are introduced (particularly in a book on philosophy). But the *meaning* of words like these needs to be explored, for certainly they are not self-evident.

The trouble is that when the neorationalist in education—he, say, of the Hutchins school—talks of "reason" and "thinking" he rarely troubles to say exactly what he intends by them. The words are thrown at us like eternal absolutes, ignorance of which must constitute a mortal sin. We are given, say, a typical and now familiar statement like this: "If education is rightly understood, it will be understood as the cultivation of the intellect. The cultivation of the intellect is the same good for all men in all societies. . . ." What Hutchins intends by such a pronunciamento about the higher learning in America seems to be that "intellect" is something like the pure reason basic to the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas. It is a register of eternal truth and reality. It can be disciplined through dialectic. It is, above all, a refuge from the relativism stemming (allegedly) from contemporary worship of science and an escape from the frantic and pragmatic improvisation which (allegedly) dominates not only our education but our entire culture.

It is quite late in the day to be reminded that thinking may be

something other than the cataleptic seizure of metaphysical truth. Thinking as problem-solving is now so familiar in both psychological exposition and scientific practice and methodology that it is difficult to see how anything new can be said about it. Moreover, a general statement of the position was made earlier in our discussion of the problems of knowledge. Perhaps, then, the most economical handling of the question is simply (a) to state what is meant by thinking as problem-solving; (b) to describe the characteristics of reflective thinking; and (c) to suggest the implications, moral and educational, which may follow.

*Thinking as Problem-solving.* To speak about "thinking" in an educational context is clearly to speak about *reflective* thinking. The term "thinking" is, of course, so broad as to mean literally anything which goes on in our heads. There is nothing wrong about unreflective or autistic thinking, such as daydreaming, wishful thinking, imagination, rationalization, or "mere" believing; but it is simply not talked about by most educators. (This may or may not be a serious limitation in any discussion about thinking.) The problem, then, is why all our conscious life is not confined to unreflective fantasy and habit. Certainly they are less trouble. No one has to urge us to daydream or to follow custom. But we do have to be counseled to think—reflectively. It is assumed to be hard work, even unpleasant. So, some stimulus would seem to be indicated to account for the challenge to fantasy, authority, and habit; thinking in the honorific sense calls for a psychological origin and a natural history.

The most plausible hypothesis would be that we think (and from now on the qualifier "reflective" is being understood) when we have to think, and we have to think—or, at least, are tempted to—when we are confronted with a problem, when some difficulty forces us out of our customary and easier ways of responding. Perplexity, doubt, indecision—these look like the very creators of human thought. Without them, there would be no real occasion to stop daydreaming or to suspect habit and authority; neither would there be any reason to continue thinking when it became arduous. Problems not only provide the initial impetus but direct and steady the course of thinking and set up the goal of each process, namely, the solution of the difficulty which stimulated it. Almost any event can act as a motivator of thinking. Whatever sets us to doubting what

up to then had been taken for granted is a potential activator, although we must realize that a problem situation will not automatically coerce us to think. Doubts can be resolved by flipping a coin or by continuing our usual habit patterns. The opportunity to think can always be passed over. Thinking may depend upon a problem, but all problems do not force us to think. Many of them can be met and handled by blind, impulsive, conditioned behavior. But this is less likely when men are confronted with genuine problems.

A genuine problem is found illustrated in what is now a classic example, John Dewey's "forked-road" situation. Simple and homely, it nevertheless contains all the essential elements of a genuine problem. Those elements are to the effect of establishing what William James called a "real, live option," namely, a situation where there are incompatible alternatives between which decision must be made. We cannot take both forks of the road, at least not at the same time, and we must take one. With such a forced option confronting us, a premium is put upon the transforming of unreflective conduct into reflective. Problems can range from that of a broken shoelace to the choice of a profession or to a decision about martyrdom or to the most abstruse of speculative riddles. Anything which breaks in upon our routine experience and forces us to make a choice between truly disjunctive alternatives can prod us to thought (although, as mentioned before, even such a choice will not *force* us to undertake reflective thinking). But what are the characteristics of reflective activity? How is it different from unreflective?

Before touching on that, there is a significant addition to be made to this hypothesis of problem-solving. In the more recent vocabulary of his *Logic*, Dewey speaks of the "indeterminate situation" instead of a "problematic" one. The change is not one concerned essentially with felicity of expression. Instead, it is directed to pointing out that a doubtful situation is not simply doubtful in a psychological sense. The situation itself is not completely determinate. That is why there is a problem and why we have doubts. If subjective doubt were not in some way related to an existential situation, it would be to that degree pathological. It is the situation itself which is to be unified, integrated, resolved. And the reflective (scientific) means through which that result is to be brought about

are themselves operations interacting physically with the objective field. Any other "resolution" of an indeterminate situation is "mental" in the pejorative sense. Such an interpretation would point back to a preceding discussion of "knowledge as contemplation," for it challenges the idea that reality is never indeterminate, i.e., that it is fixedly impervious to change or manipulation. It also points ahead to one of the major characteristics of reflective thinking, that it indeed is engaged in solving a problem, that it gets things done.

*The Nature of Reflective Thinking.* This factor of *operative* quality is a decisive criterion for separating reflective from unreflective thought. Daydreaming and reverie do manage, of course, to kill time; in that, perhaps they are operative. But really they have no work to do. Fancy is for its own sake: It is "autistic." It is not going anywhere; as such, it solves no problems. Now, to repeat an earlier point, there is nothing disgraceful about this. Considering the recognized significance of consummatory experiences, fantasy is assumed to be necessary for a complete life. It is simply different from thinking as we are now discussing it. True, daydreams and reverie, the free play of the imagination, can easily lead to suggestions which do remove difficulties. Yet, that is incidental. If it does become deliberate and actionable, then, almost by definition, unreflective thinking turns into reflective. At the same time, if the process has been successful, the objective situation itself, that environmental field which includes both organism and its surroundings, is also rearranged as it is in any scientific experimental situation. That is, in its operative aspects, scientific method is the very distillation of reflective thought, its most refined and exemplary model.

The characteristic of being operative is not unique or confined to reflective thinking. Habit can remove difficulties, too; it is indeed operative, sometimes too much so. We tend to draw conclusions without thinking about them. Therefore, a second characteristic must be added, that of being *critical*. By this is meant roughly the reflective quality of not taking things for granted, of refusing to act automatically every time there is a problem situation. To be critical means to question authority and habit, to examine experience before using it. Here is an attitude of seeing alternatives, of considering pros and cons; an attitude which tends to inhibit impulsive action if there is the possibility of doing something else.

These two characteristics of reflective thinking lead to a third. For if thinking implies problem-solving action, and, at the same time, critical appraisal of action, there is introduced a period of *delayed response*. The word "reflection" itself carries the connotation of suspense of judgment, of introduction of a time interval before a reaction is effected. The quantitative element of time is not significant. The delay may vary from only a fraction of a second to one of many years. It is the qualitative or functional aspect of delay that is characteristic of reflective thinking. The first thing which suggests itself is not immediately put into operation. Several alternative reactions are examined and a decision is then made. Of course, the reflective attitude can become a caricature—everyone knows the story of the philosophic donkey placed equidistantly between two equally succulent bales of hay. But however caricaturish its extreme may become, delayed reaction is the most characteristically human of attributes, the very differential that helps to define man. To explain this factor of delay would be equally to explain the cortical and linguistic marvels which make possible the entire dimension of human thought.

*Educational Outcomes of Reflective Thinking.* Before turning to the moral and education implications which may be found in this description of reflective thinking, it should be recalled that the present discussion stemmed from the over-all question of the role of thinking in education. The neorationalist seems merely to celebrate what he calls reason and thinking and to take for granted their educational priority; the above pages have been an effort, however elementary, at definition or at least description of what is intended by an august term like "thinking." They also have been to the effect of questioning the notion that thinking is self-contained and aloof, to be approached only with a classical talisman or literary open-sesame. As a method of handling problems, rather than as a "thing," thinking is an integral part of a situation and cannot intelligently be discussed when it is removed from the situation. For problems are specific, and so are the relevant techniques for meeting them. There is, indeed, a common attitude—the reflective or scientific attitude—at the root of all bona fide thinking, but there is no monolithic "thought" which is, say, the only proper subject of liberal education. Intelligent inquiry is something to be analyzed and identified as it



works; it is not simply the subject of commendation. It has a natural history which needs to be traced but does not have a ritual which must be performed. To understand thinking is to understand the problem which demands solution (which would be still another argument for the widest kind of orientation for liberal education).

The common attitude mentioned just now is not a neutral one, morally epicene. Implicit in the characteristics of reflective thinking are educational values of the widest-reaching sort. Perhaps the most significant of them is to be found in that complex of qualities associated with the reflective factors of critical caution and of delayed reaction. More important than any particular routine of scientific experiment or of thoughtful behavior is a general spirit, a temper of mind—that of reliance on tentativeness, hypothesis, and the concept of probable error.<sup>4</sup> Here is a way of considering problems which may well constitute the unique contribution that scientific method (which, to repeat, is the model of reflective thinking) is to make to modern culture. It certainly is a unique contribution to modern education.

It is not sweetness and light which recommends as a top value the truly liberal attitude of tolerance and disenchantment with dogma. It is the necessity to adjust and to survive. No other attitude can equip man to deal with the dramatic changes in his experience which each year brings forth. Were reason as illiberally fixed and absolute as some of its celebrants maintain, it could never accommodate itself either to the revolutionary impact of technology or—what is more important—to the kind of world which allows technology to make an impact. That is simply to say, a nature which has produced intelligence as a powerful adaptive force must also be a nature in which such a force can operate. A rigid, unchanging, iron block of a universe would need only instinct and habit as adjustive accommodations; a fantastic, whirling, completely undetermined world would put a premium on chance, impulse, and improvisation. The setting in which man finds himself is neither, although a little of each: precarious and contingent, yet it is amenable to law and prediction; pliant and inflexible, it yields to the efforts of rational control while it still resists them. This is to be expected, if evolution is taken seriously; failure to adjust would be as fatal to men as to dinosaurs. This is why experimentalism would

hope to institutionalize habits of tentative and self-correcting inquiry, and why an experimentalist theory of education could never be content with teaching which conformed only to the past and to the unchanging. A statement prepared by Professor Lawrence G. Thomas is quoted in this connection.

This is the philosophical setting for many of the key principles of progressive education. For example, the conception of evolutionary change as being purpose-generating, rather than being purposely preplanned, means that educational aims as well as content should be continually re-fashioned for a particular society in a particular place and for a particular time. Since the need for thinking arises primarily from problems of personal adjustment, the emphasis of education should be on helping students to live happily and well, here and now, while preparation for the future receives secondary consideration as a by-product of these satisfying experiences. This conception of thinking also affects the way in which learning is conceived. Thus, whatever motivates the learner's efforts defines the actual learning goal that is being sought by him. The learner's purpose in knowing becomes a constituent of the object known. Consequently, the primary concerns and emphases of the teacher are similarly affected. The learning goals of the class should be developed by the teacher and the students in co-operation rather than fixed in advance by the teacher, even though goals developed in this manner may often be unpredictable. Then, as the students achieve increased skill in defining their purposes and estimating the subject matter required for their fulfillment, they should participate increasingly in selecting curriculum materials, making their own assignments, and evaluating their progress. Any subject matter, even though favored by the teacher, which cannot qualify as having significant, functional value in the eyes of the students is either not important to teach them or is inappropriate to their present level of development.

At this point a demurrer needs to be entered against a familiar libel on the tentative spirit, i.e., that it signifies only indecision and vacillation, the hallmark of a tired liberalism. To rely on probability and tentativeness is to risk being accused of sitting on the fence or of standing with "both feet firmly planted in mid-air," of seeing both sides of the question and so being blind to either, of developing into such a split personality that one cannot possibly make up his mind on anything decisive. That these results may have happened in certain cases cannot be denied, nor is the present argument an apology for tired liberals or nonliberals. But it is a contention that the alleged tie-up between tentativeness and paralyzing indecision

is a travesty and a caricature, repudiated by the entire history of reflective behavior. For one thing, it must be remembered that a prime characteristic of thinking is its problem-solving character. If it were not actionable and did not get things done, it would simply not be what we have in mind. It would then be merely "reflection" in the donkey-story sense. If this is simply a theoretical defense, it may be added that the history of science indicates that nearly every significant advance it has made was originally projected along lines that, at the outset, were no more than provisional, even makeshift. To require certainty before action contravenes the very sequence of scientific method. It would contradict the meaning of hypothesis itself, for the nature of hypothesis is precisely that it be *both* provisional *and* predictive. When was a one-hundred-to-nothing chance demanded before experiment be performed?

The accusation that uncertainty precludes action rests, of course, on the assumption that *unless there be absolute certainty nothing can be done*. It need not be added that this is clearly the basic assumption of all brands of totalitarianism, left or right, secular or religious. Unless there be an almost mystical unanimity on doctrine, political and moral action is undermined. Toleration can only get in the way. On this basis we must continue to mistake prejudice for eternal truth and to see no reason for doing anything about our beliefs except assert them still more loudly, which is the very antithesis of reflective conduct. The modesty which comes with knowledge makes action intelligent; it does not stop it. To misquote Bertrand Russell a little we may conclude: To teach how to live without certainty, and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief goal of education in our day. A statement prepared by Professor Thomas is quoted here.

The consequence of this view for education in moral behavior is to place the emphasis on honest, careful deliberation before action, rather than on conformance to set standards or on merely good intentions. The traditional moral standards in our culture are to be presented as hypotheses—the leading or most promising hypotheses, to be sure, when they have a long history of success in promoting satisfying human adjustments—to be examined and tested deliberately in solving the present problems of students. Each person learns moral responsibility to the extent that he can normally predict and deliberately intend the consequences, on himself and the lives of others, of pursuing his own purposes. The test of

effectual deliberation, as well as the resources for its improvement, lies in action. Hence, each person should learn to evaluate his action in terms of whether its consequences are more completely and lastingly satisfying to him than the probable results of possible alternative actions. This evaluation is not impulsive or whimsical or narrow; it is reflective, deliberative, taking all relevant factors into account. No deliberation is so good that it foresees accurately all the consequences of possible courses of action, so action is necessary to improve the quality of the next deliberation. Among groups, such as a class in school, the authority for right and wrong conduct and the sanctions for securing right conduct should result from a co-operative, deliberative effort involving a consensus of all the people involved, including the children. This kind of authority is relatively tentative but ever improvable, and makes growth in moral responsibility a central dimension of education.

One final point needs to be made at the close of this discussion on the place of thinking in education. It is that the present criticism of reason as contemplation is in no sense a criticism *überhaupt* of "contemplation." As consummatory and aesthetic, whatever it may be called, the act of being arrested by some incandescent moment of experience is an ultimate in any man's philosophy. If the critics of pragmatism and experimentalism do not grasp this, they cannot have read (or understood) John Dewey's *Art as Experience*. Nor can they have assimilated his contention "that art—the mode of activity that is charged with meanings capable of immediately enjoyed possession—is the complete culmination of nature, and that 'science' is properly a handmaiden that conducts natural events to this happy issue."<sup>9</sup> But what is not acceptable to the experimentalist is the idea that all experience is a mode of knowing. This is "intellectualism" in the unwelcome sense. It is the familiar spectator theory of knowledge outlined and challenged earlier. But, as Dewey puts it, things are *had* before (and after) they are known. Knowing is an instrumental process of adjustment, not a mirror-image. It originates in and returns to the immediate and consummatory closures of non-cognitive experience. Which is not to deny that the act of cognition itself can be such a consummatory experience. Science can also be an art. So, contemplation as *the* cognitive act which is itself *the* focus of experience is quite another thing from "contemplation" as a symbol of the final deliverance of an integrated experience. To

9. Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

celebrate this is not "intellectualism" but simply a recognition of what is elemental and indubitable.

### *Relation of the School to Society and the Individual*

The concepts of society and individual and their relations to the school can possibly be handled together, not simply for reasons of economy of space but because it is theoretically impossible to separate them. In fact, what seems to be the unquestionable division between individual and society may well be a signal illustration of that cultural dualism we had occasion to refer to at the beginning of this chapter. This thought needs to be developed a little.

*Education as a Social Function.* It would be a serious misunderstanding, not to say a caricature, to interpret the above paragraph as a slighting of the laudable connotations surrounding "individuality" in ethics and education. Any such slighting would be an affectation, if not a sign of obtuseness. But what is being questioned here is the dichotomy which sets up the individual as an independent entity distinct from another entity, society. Their relationship is seen sometimes as opposition, sometimes as co-operation; so, two polar forces are postulated to account for human change—change from within *versus* change from without. Or, in Arthur Koestler's phrase, the yogi *or* the commissar. Once the split has been formulated, and especially if it has become institutionalized, one becomes engaged in the industry of showing how "interaction" can overcome it—interaction, that is, between elements which have been persistently regarded as exclusively "individual" or "social." When such interaction between a disinfected personality and an omnivorous society fails and disillusion follows, then the danger of turning wholeheartedly to the yogi or to the commissar becomes that much more real.

These alternatives, of course, have been presented too stringently. There would probably be few all-out defenders of either position. Nor, possibly, would there be too much objection to the substitution of "transaction" for "interaction." Nevertheless, these are no straw-man concepts being set up. Too often the terms *individual* and *society* are merely abstractions having little or no referential significance. This is certainly the case when the terms are thought to have a fixed meaning and to refer to entities with an independent status, so that society comes to be regarded as a thing-in-itself, having its

own values as over against those of the individual; and individuality comes to be understood as a prime example of splendid isolation, unmoved by what goes on without. This would be comparable to singling out one blade in the cutting transaction of a pair of scissors.

Yet having said this, one must go on to say that the idea of transaction, important as it is, should not obscure a pattern still more important. Which is that ~~the~~ sociocultural environment be credited (or debited) with providing the conditions under which individuals are indeed formed. George Mead's thesis about the self, now being rediscovered by the interpersonal psychologists and others, needs to be looked at again by the teacher. The thesis of a self and mind being formed by the agency of social forces through the technique of language symbol-making is one which puts a premium on the means for *reaching* the individual. It underscores the idea that social and educational devices alone can move, develop, and even create moral individuals. It is only when we turn our backs upon the notion of a preciously insulated individual with his allegedly impregnable nature and inaccessible feelings that anything like ethical control and prediction become possible. *The* individual can be touched by metaphysics alone; *specific* individuals are moved by specific social and educational situations.

*Educational Potentialities and Responsibility of the Individual.* But this "conception of education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind."<sup>10</sup> Fortunately, the presuppositions and processes of the society Dewey and the experimentalists have in mind have already appeared in our earlier discussion of certain educational presuppositions and processes, namely, those of growth, of universal educability, and of thinking as unbuttoned rather than genteel. If there is any basic assumption or primitive notion which is foundational for social democracy as well as for democratic education, it must be one which affirms the value of the realization of individual potentialities. Surely, you mean the realization of only "good" potentialities, don't you? This query was considered before in the context of "growth in general." In that context, "good" potentialities can refer only to those which permit the maximum development of a personality,

10. John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 112. New York: Macmillan Co., 1916.

which do not inhibit fulfilment of other capacities. Now, it would be a sign of egregious naïveté to think that a statement like this is a recipe or a formula to be applied as a poultice is applied. The over-all realization of potentialities, to repeat, is a basic assumption or orientation which sets the framework of a democratic ethic and of a democratic education; it is the "respect for the individual person" referred to in the opening chapter of this yearbook. As such it is, of course, a maxim and so no substitute for the realistic recognition that in even the most normal of individuals there is always a conflict of drives which has to be resolved somehow. In what ways can it be resolved?

The alternatives proposed in the opening chapter are as clear as any. Each person can be left entirely alone to work out his own solution—except that no person is ever entirely alone. He is at least the victim of the newsstand, the radio, and the television, and his tastes and basic resources are too often established for him. Or he can be patronized and given what is clearly good for him—except that he always will resist what is good for him. Or he can truly be educated—which means that he learn "to choose more responsibly what he wants to do in a social setting with the fullest regard for the consequences." This third alternative is so much the more difficult and challenging one that it is a wonder it is seriously entertained. Yet it is the only one which makes sense, at any rate in terms of the basic postulate of experimentalist education. That there is a calculated risk of failure, that the nicest kind of balance needs to be maintained between individually-tested conclusions on the one hand and those stemming from social experience on the other, that the authoritarian and the laissez-faire alternatives are much more comfortable for the educator—these must go without saying. Nevertheless, if there is any educational merit in concepts like growth and development of critical intelligence; if there is any moral and political strength in our often too casual remarks about respect for the person; indeed, if there is any real tie-in of philosophy to education, then the risks need to be taken and the uncomfortable and precarious equilibrium must be striven for. If not, education abdicates its responsibility or turns into animal training.

*The Place of Controversial Issues in Popular Education.* There is the same calculated risk of failure in opening up the field of con-

troversial social issues, the same uncertain balance between complacency and rootlessness. But, again, unless educators are willing to claim either irresponsibility or the power to condition rigidly, the risk and the insecurity must be accepted. Now, if one may be abrupt about it (at least to save time), the assumption will be made that, *in general*, there has been introduced into American education an acceptance of the *abstract* idea that economic and political problems, even of the most debatable nature, can be discussed freely. If this is a poorly supported assumption, then there is little point in a book like this. However, it cannot necessarily be assumed as a practice in American education that there is free discussion of *specific* issues, say, Marxism and Russian communism. Since this topic raises questions which are definitely in the foreground today, especially in higher education, it will be used here as the focus of the problem.

Two distinct aspects of the problem can be considered separately, (a) should Marxism and Russian communism (which are definitely not the same thing) be made available to students, and (b) should Communists be permitted to teach in our schools?

*The Teaching of Communism in American Schools.* Here I should like to be able to make an assumption similar to one above, i.e., that *any* economic and political question can be discussed freely; unfortunately, this would probably be an overstated assumption. If it is, then the following argument needs to be addressed (not to the so-called liberals who do not need it, but) to those who regard the school as dispenser and defender of vested, accepted ideas, to those who would accept neither what Brubacher calls the romantic nor the left-wing branches (see chap. i) of progressive education. The argument must be stated peremptorily, in a summary fashion and even vulgarly pragmatic, for if educators are not yet convinced on this point, it is very late in the day to try to persuade them. It is the most blunt and opportunistic defense of freedom of expression, one going back long before John Stuart Mill to John Milton and John Locke, a defense on grounds which are neither sentimental, nor absolutistic, nor even a matter of "rights;" it is simply a matter of shrewd prudence. If we are against something, we must know what it is we are against. That's all there is to it. No debate team ever walked on a platform knowing only one side of the question.



An affirmative team which knew only the affirmative (and not the negative) simply did not know the affirmative. For example, if Americans are indeed to be enlisted as a force against Soviet ideology, then it is precisely this ideology that they must understand. If this doesn't seem clear and persuasive, then it would be useless to go on. True, there is some risk in this. Possibly some few students, for a time, may be hypnotized by what may seem a plausible case for communism. But, first, it is a risk well worth taking; and, second, the risk is much overestimated.

I know of no better antidote to Communist philosophy than the prescribed reading of the *Daily Worker* and the *Monthly Digest of the Soviet Press*. That to do this would incur immediate suspicion is one of the tragic ironies resulting from the fear inspired by current agitation over Communists in government. I may here express my belief that at the moment the American school has much more to fear from McCarthyism than from communism. I do not use "right" and "left" because it must be clearly understood that Communists are not of the left. American education is confronted with the very real danger of succumbing to the witch-hunting and hysteria of anti-Communist campaigning based on intolerance; at the very least, there is a serious danger of dereliction in the handling of unpopular social problems, the engendering of a dull blanket of fear and apathy or of mediocrity and unimaginativeness, the failure of vital and independent thinking. Spread of attitudes like these would be far more fatal than the most successful Communist conspiracy. Not that this last danger is being underestimated, as the following pages will indicate. Were this chapter being addressed to the general public, then a flat assertion like this would need to be documented. I do not think it needs to be in speaking to the teacher.

The preceding argument for full discussion of even the most controversial questions may seem commonplace to many, even to those whose educational philosophies differ profoundly from the one expressed in this chapter. But I submit that it is the experimentalist logic that helps to make such an argument meaningful. Were truth and values fixed and absolute, as is maintained in some sections of this volume, then free discussion and advocacy of what is *not* true and valuable would be something of a gratuitous gesture, indulgent and patronizing. But when truth and value are to be experimentally

arrived at, then the *pro* and *con* of controversy is a matter of necessity, not one of politeness, sweetness, and light. Actually, the whole tradition of civil liberties and democracy cannot be logically compatible with nonnaturalistic, nonsecular, or nonscientific philosophies, for in such a context the democratic tradition must be sanctified and handed down—literally—to man. This is a violation of the entire spirit of liberalism. Free discussion cannot depend on the contingency of one's heart being sentimentally in the right place at the right time. It also should follow consistently from the premises of a philosophic position. A statement prepared by Professor Thomas is quoted here.

This criticism applies directly to those who believe that absolute truths and standards exist and who also believe that they possess sure knowledge of these absolutes. Given these assumptions, if they permit the "other side" to be presented and debated, they are being tolerant, even indulgent, toward the presentation of "error." Such tolerance could be safely expected only when the issue is merely academic or when no one can doubt that only the "right" conclusions will be reached by all students. But the criticism also applies, although indirectly, to those who believe in the existence of absolute truths and standards yet disclaim that they or anyone else can have sure knowledge of these absolutes. While these "liberal" classicists tend to encourage honest exploration of all sides of a controversy, they are still looking for *the* truth (instead of being content with contextual truths) and are inclined to discount or reject conclusions which are at variance with the straight-line development of traditional "approximations" of the truth. Moreover, in times of crisis, they are easily tempted to believe that *their* "approximations" are closer to the real truth than anyone else's. The only lasting protection against the temptation to become authoritarian is to stake one's faith on the free *process* of experimental inquiry rather than on the existence of absolute truths and standards.

*Should Communists Be Employed as Teachers?* Do the arguments recommending a familiarity with the ideas of Marxism and communism (among other ideas) carry over to the toleration of Communists and crypto-Communists (fellow-travelers) as teachers?<sup>11</sup>

11. By "crypto-Communists" is meant those who in their *activities and political behavior follow without serious deviation* the Communist party line, especially in foreign affairs. This is *not* guilt by association, itself a much overworked phrase. But in these days of official Communist secrecy about party membership the only test of affiliation—unless we are prepared to say the whole thing is a myth—is that of *extended, consistent, and overt behavior*—e.g., a long and *uncompromising* record of signing petitions, attending political demonstrations, meetings, and conventions, circulating pledges, sending tele-

In the following discussion let us assume that the *technical* competence of the classroom teacher is not in question.

Why should we accept Communists as teachers? The only serious argument would seem to be that it would be a violation of civil liberties and academic freedom if we did not.<sup>12</sup> Let us look at this argument. First, the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution does not guarantee the right to be a teacher. We are not now discussing the right of the Communist as a citizen and a political worker. That is a problem for the courts to decide. It is the Communist-as-teacher that is our concern. In this connection, it is a real pity that so many self-styled liberals and progressives (those of the "dough-faced" variety—"democratic men with totalitarian affinities") have not been able to discriminate between heresy, which we need, and conspiracy, which we do not. Nor, apparently, have they taken the trouble to read the *official* instructions of the Communist party to its members, which includes, among other items, the charge "to take advantage of the position in the classroom without exposing themselves" to propagandize for the party. Would a professed liberal (since I regard myself as an unregenerate liberal and radical, I have to use "professed" or "sentimental" when I have someone else in mind) accept as teacher a Ku Klux Klanner who was pledged "to take advantage of the position in the classroom" and whose *behavior* indicated he was doing precisely this? Or a Catholic? Or a single taxer? Or even a Methodist or a Republican? Why, then, a Communist? Are they more worthy of respect than the others? Or is this form of open-mindedness merely another way to *épater le bourgeois*?

But a technically competent Communist teacher, say of mathematics, can handle his subject in a purely objective way. Let us accept that—even if it contravenes the *official* instructions of the Communist party to its members. Does a teacher leave all responsibility when he leaves the classroom? In most colleges and univer-

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grams, and the like, all of it in the interest of Communist policy. In other words, if one cannot distinguish the pro-Soviet activity of an avowed Communist from that of someone else, I regard the latter as a crypto-Communist or fellow-traveler and apply the same arguments to both.

12. The argument that only a Communist is competent to teach the ideas of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin is no more significant than the argument that our anthropology departments in the universities should include cannibals on their staffs.

sities and high schools—at least those paying some lip-service to progressive education—he is also a counsellor, an adviser, a consultant, a sponsor of political groups. If he advises vigorously and gives clear *behavioral* evidence of lack of independent political judgment and absence of counselling responsibility (as when he consistently advises student groups to sign particularly damaging petitions and telegrams), is he not acting as a teacher? A line of cleavage, of course, must be drawn between a person as teacher and as citizen, between public and private; but the question being raised here is simply this: Is *any* overt activity of the teacher legitimate if only it can be labeled “political”?

Another way of saying this is to ask whether the concepts of civil liberties and academic freedom are to be regarded as absolutes. Unless they are, the entire argument for Communists-as-teachers would seem to collapse. (In fact, it collapses long before that when a judgment is made on the question whether the American Communist party is a genuine political party or a political conspiracy financed, controlled, and manipulated by the Soviet Union. Even if the courts had not decided on this point, a thorough reading of the official Communist literature should give the answer.) The philosophy of experimentalism can recognize no absolutes, in civil liberties or out of them. By absolute, as noted earlier, is meant that which has no context. It is tiresome to have to repeat that nothing in our Bill of Rights gives anyone the “right” to cry “Fire!” whenever he wishes; or to shout “death to the Jews!” to an anti-Semitic mob in front of a synagogue; or even to advise on a street-corner the assassination of President Eisenhower. These may be banal and egregious examples, but they simply indicate that there are legal and customary limits to political behavior, as to any other. If this is accepted—and how can it be denied?—then there can be no meaning to *absolute* civil liberties or academic freedom. Just where the limit is to be drawn is always a difficult and technical matter, perhaps demanding nothing short of a Supreme Court decision on “clear and present danger.” Speaking for myself, I should want to draw the line so as to permit the fullest possible expression of individual political freedom; yet lines have to be drawn. This may be too bad, but it is simply something we have to face, just as we have to face the fact that political democracy itself is the

most difficult form of government to handle, because there are no absolutes. Absolute government, i.e., totalitarianism, is, by comparison, a relatively simple affair.

As elsewhere, it may be that these arguments will seem congenial to philosophies quite opposed to experimentalism; but, again, it must be insisted that it is its repudiation of absolutes, of the *idée fixe*, of the closed mind, of the unholy justification of means by ends, of fanaticism, that makes experimentalism the logical enemy of a monomania such as Stalinism. For this expression of communism stands as the antithesis, in method and approach, of the ethical and educational principles foundational for experimentalism. Indeed, the experimentalist has noticed, with more than a little interest, that so often the repentant Communist swings from one absolute to another: He now rejects communism but not authority, certainty, and dogma. In short, it is not the pragmatist and naturalist who is to be feared for his alleged propensity to betray principle for what works, but, as Herbert Muller has so excellently pointed out, "it is the man of fixed principles who is more apt to become profoundly unprincipled." When any value is put above all else, outside the reach of criticism or amendment, as the only true and right value, then it is consistent to sacrifice to it; and the diabolism of "the end justifies the means" is a logical follow-through. The absolute value may be the salvation of an immortal soul or it may be the classless society; if it is regarded as ultimate, certain, and unchallengeable, nothing less significant deserves consideration. It is so frighteningly easy to become fanatic when one has the truth.

To close this discussion on a more positive note: More than anyone else, the American teacher must realize the enormous importance of maintaining a dynamic balance—"dynamic," to indicate that there is no nicely fixed mid-point between extremes—among the social and political forces impinging upon the school. The teacher must take the lead in supporting and actively fighting for the most liberal interpretation of 'free thinking on social issues', for without this, education is, at best, an innocuous affair; at the same time, the teacher must guard against becoming the dupe, innocent and sentimental, of forces which may indeed be subversive and conspiratorial. Once again, there is no pat formula to bring this about. But one suggestion may be made.

At the root of the various definitions and arguments in the area of civil liberties and academic freedom are certain basic assumptions, assumptions stemming clearly from the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophical background of the Enlightenment. Although different formulations of these presuppositions could be made, the following three would seem to be foundational: (a) Man is a rational animal. Any man of right reason will be able to make intelligent and unbiased judgment if he is given the necessary information. (b) There is a free market in ideas with equal access to facts and opinions. (c) These ideas can be accepted at face-value; that is, they are overt expressions of fundamental opinions and beliefs (and not covert devices subject to cynical manipulation).

Now, even to mention postulates like these is to uncover their inadequacy, or, more positively, to indicate they need renovation and restatement. What we know of modern psychology, of the techniques of mass communication and propaganda, of the use of the "big lie" and of the brutal exploitation of civil liberties to undermine civil liberties—all this drives to the conclusion that the traditional assumptions are transparently insufficient. Such an observation is not an obscure device for recommending a compromise on civil liberties. On the contrary, it is the insistence that assumptions are indeed necessary on which to found free thinking (or anything else); but that all postulate-sets, even in mathematics, can be adjusted to changing knowledge and need; and that unless something like the classical presuppositions can be reworked, then possibly more dubious assumptions, as of a theological character, will be turned to, or, on the other hand, a cynical defeatism might develop. An example of the kind of change which might be possible here is found in the evolution of the concept of "rights" from their "natural" and "metaphysical" character à la seventeenth- and eighteenth-century to the more flexible interpretation of rights as moral claims which man makes upon society so as to develop his full potentialities, an interpretation which has provided a basis for much of the discussion of "new" bills of rights.<sup>13</sup>

To sum up, then: Men definitely have not said the last word on the subject of civil liberties and academic freedom; the new and

13. See Harry Girvetz, *From Wealth to Welfare*, pp. 223-24. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1950.

growing sciences of man and the new approaches to theory of value can be expected to contribute knowledge and insights which can help us rethink and reformulate the traditional axioms, definitions, and arguments; and, finally, this is a notable and positive contribution American education can make to American culture.

### *The School and Religion*

Despite its importance, the problem of religion in education will be considered under only two aspects, each of which—at least from the viewpoint of experimentalism—may be briefly noted, undoubtedly too briefly.

The first aspect is that of religion defined in the usual and more orthodox fashion, where it connotes the supernatural and, usually, an institution. Since experimentalists are naturalists, what they would have to settle for here—or, rather, push for—would be a historical, objective, and comparative study of world religions. The religious experience and the religious institution are, of course, vital parts of all culture. They certainly should not be omitted from education. But they can be studied in an unbiased, nondogmatic, and relaxed fashion, which is what the nondenominational school can and should do. However, to attempt to indoctrinate not simply one religion, say, Christianity, but even the general spirit of supernaturalism is not the province of the school. This, if wanted, can be left to the church and to the home.

The second aspect has to do with Dewey's suggestion that the word "religious" be distinguished from "religion." The religious attitude is one with which we approach our basic values, an attitude of deep emotional commitment and motivation. If "religion" is to be understood in this broad sense, then certainly nothing worthy of the name education can be aloof from it. It will be recognized that the experimentalist in philosophy is often a humanist in religion. He feels that commitment, motivation, and emotional stirring cannot be absent from any serious philosophy. But he feels that such stirrings have often been entirely absorbed by the supernatural, traditional, and institutionalized expressions of religion; whereas, his hope is that "devotion so intense as to be religious" can also be aroused by allegiance to the typically human qualities of creative intelligence and critical inquiry. The experimentalist believes that

emotional commitment can be made to these as well as to the supernatural and the remote, and here he gets excited, educationally and religiously excited.

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## CHAPTER VI

### *On the Marxist Philosophy of Education\**

ROBERT S. COHEN

"The germs of the education of the future are to be found in the factory system."—Karl Marx.

#### *Introduction*

The challenge of Marxist thought is more profound than the challenge of Soviet armed force. Karl Marx and his many varied followers forged a new outlook on life, on man, on society, on history, and it was an outlook that arose entirely within our Western civilization. Original in conception, in sweep, and in application, it was yet the heir to the entire treasury of European and American experience:

- a) the ethical notion of Old Testament prophetic social justice;
- b) the common sharing of early Christian communal brotherhood;
- c) the great protest against human exploitation uttered by Jesus;
- d) the rational attitude toward natural and human problems of the ancient Greek historians and philosophers;
- e) the realistic emphasis on facts placed by modern science;
- f) the Baconian insight that knowledge is power;
- g) the philosophic awareness that human knowledge is distorted by inadequacy in the knower as much as by elusiveness of the object to be known;

\* I am indebted to the Faculty Research Committee of Wesleyan University for grants which have been of aid in this and other studies in Marxist thought. I must also record my indebtedness to Dr. John Lewis for permitting me to study some unpublished lecture notes on educational theory.

I expect that this essay will assist American teachers in their understanding of the Communist approach to education. It is always difficult for an outsider to write an exposition of the views of a school of thought. Although I am not a Communist, I have hopes that this study will not contain too many distortions or misstatements. At any rate, it is an attempt at an inside view written by one who is a democrat and a socialist. I should like to add that I have received courteous and intelligent assistance from a number of Marxist scholars for which I am very grateful.

- b)* the Darwinian evidence that there are no fixities in nature, that all is in lawful flux;
- i)* the evidence from France and America and England that men can refashion their social order when they have a mind and a power to;
- j)* the creative daring and substantial achievement of capitalism;
- k)* the lesson of industrial technology that poverty is literally no longer necessary;
- l)* the French socialist feeling that liberty is somehow linked with equality;
- m)* the classic English economic teaching that the source of value lies only in the human labor expended;
- n)* the German philosophic lesson that men in exploitative societies are alienated from their true humane nature, whether they be master or slave, lord or serf, banker or factory laborer.

This is no alien ideology but one of us, and it requires the utmost of careful study. Its analyses must be tested against the experience of each of us. Its critique of the existing society compels the most serious attention. And its relative weakness in holding the devotion of Americans should cause us to overlook neither its enormous impact on all Western thought, our own included, nor its capacity for arousing the deep loyalty of intelligent, sensitive, humane, and even religious men and women throughout the world.

In the first part of this chapter, I shall set forth certain essential features of the Marxist outlook, and then, in the second part, I shall develop as much educational theory as seems implied with reasonable certainty by that outlook. The world is interested in the Soviet development of Marxist thought, and I shall, therefore, ignore, for the most part, those socialist and Marxist ideas which have not been associated with the Soviet Communist tradition, as developed within the U.S.S.R. and to a lesser extent elsewhere. So far as possible, factual illustrations will be drawn from Soviet educational realities, but this is not intended to be a study in Soviet educational practices, nor even a history of Soviet educational theories. It is an essay on the implications of Marxism for the education of men. Moreover, in keeping with the Marxist emphasis on concrete social reality, I shall hope to show the Marxist lesson for the teacher and school in a capitalist democracy just as much as under socialist revolutionary transition and in the later stable socialist society.<sup>1</sup>

1. Readers, whose interests are more practical, may find it advantageous to turn first to the discussion of principles of education and then to read the dis-

## *The Philosophy and Social Theory of Marxism*

### THE APPROACH TO A SCIENCE OF MAN

We must remind ourselves that neither Karl Marx nor any other Communist was born a Marxist. The man, Marx, faced problems common to Western European university graduates in the early and mid-nineteenth century, just as the man, Lenin, faced the socially pressing problems of all Russian intellectuals at the turn of the twentieth century. The history of philosophy and science, East and West, has raised two main questions preliminary to an adequate philosophy: What kind of world do we live in? What is man? In considering these, thinkers have typically found it necessary to ask the further question: How do we know? And finally, in recognition of their experience of power and responsibility, limited as each may be, thinking men have sought to answer the questions: What ought to be? What ought we to do? The sciences of nature and the study of man join with the philosophy and psychology of knowledge to provide, at least hopefully, a consistent account of man's factual environment and his relationship with it. Whether the relations of men to men can be brought into harmony with this prospective scientific account, or whether, on the contrary, human relations must be considered in a quite special and even antiscientific manner has remained a debated issue; and it is within this latter area that ethics and politics arise.

Karl Marx devoted his life to investigating the nature of man, to discovering the human essence, and in so doing he intended to achieve objective, *scientific* knowledge. His concepts and laws are not those of physics or even biology, his observational procedures are not the experiments of chemistry or the arboreta of botany, and as a scientist of human culture he may have found it of utmost difficulty to maintain an objective approach in the face of his own cultural background; but despite these differences Marx literally hoped to develop the science of society. Even this may have been subordinate to his simple goal of attaining the truth about man, for his initial observation, which leads to social science, is that man never exists in himself, he never lives as a true hermit. "Man" is

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cussion of the general philosophical and scientific principles on which the educational theory rests.

the wrong word; we should speak of "men" and we should ground our every speculation about men on the concrete behavior and relations of men as we find them. The most conspicuous feature of men and women is that they must be discussed in the plural; they are social by nature. The science of man will be the science of society.

This is but an empirical generalization from Marx's experience that men differ in their behavior, their motivations, their illusions, their knowledge, and their fears, and from his further historical observation that the ways in which men behave vary with their times. But this common-sense statement has always provoked the notion that there may be an order of development to that human nature, an order which has been historically revealed. How, in that case, shall we analyze particular historically-located men? What shall be the tools for social science, and what shall be the conceptual framework of social philosophy?

#### CAUSATION IN HISTORY

It is trivial to remark that all things change, but it is far from a trivial hypothesis to claim that the changes form a coherent pattern. Even more, is it significant to show that the pattern has a major motif, and that, whatever the myriads of events and swirls of causal threads, there is ultimately to be found a unique cause. Yet such was the conclusion of Marx and Engels, and their concept of a dominant and progressive causal process became a working hypothesis in all Marxist treatment of human affairs. That which is dominant, however, need not exercise exclusive control in human affairs. In their writings it is clear that for Marx and Engels historical causation is an affair of mutual interrelationships, secondary and tertiary responses; and indeed, beyond these subordinate effects, Marx realized that the history of society has shown that historical causation is intrinsically creative. Thus, we do not have a mechanical equivalence between cause and effect but, rather, the effect may be quite new. In particular, the new phenomenon-effect may go on to a life career of its own, and in some ways may serve as an independent causal influence on men's lives, even deflecting or modifying whatever may be the original dominant source of events. In this way a cultural institution, such as the theater, may

develop itself and may be understood in its own terms. Indeed it must be understood this way or else it will be falsely converted into something else. It will affect the lives of those in its social milieu who are not theater people, and it will, in time and under conditions to be ascertained by the sociologist of the theater, affect the very socioeconomic soil in which it grew.

Similarly the history of science will have complexities. The problems to be faced by the scientists of an age can arise in the logical development of previous science, or it can be posed for the scientists by their fellow-men. Radar research resulted from the recognition by a scientist of a nonscientific challenge to locate Nazi bombers; parts of geometrical optics were stimulated by almost photographic demands of seventeenth-century Dutch painters; fundamental mechanics was a response to the enormous demands of early modern capitalist technology as well as to the revolutionary way of thinking in the revival of Plato's mathematical philosophizing. But even if one stage of science poses an abundance of unsolved questions for the next generation of scientists—and how many examples each teacher can furnish from his own special subject matter!—yet one may reasonably doubt that this causal chain, internal to science, can be pushed back in time indefinitely. Surely there were men, however primitive, before there was science. The origin of science must then in some ultimate sense be in the nonscientific aspects of social history. Similarly, one may treat the ideas with which scientists solved their problems. Some ideas come by analogy to the solutions to other scientific problems, some by the wildest of analogies to other human affairs, some from the logically rigorous extension of previous theory, some by trial-and-error, some from the very atmosphere of the culture, some from the glaring lesson of the experience of nature. But one would have to be bold to say that these sources are not themselves *either* of previous science *or* of human experience in society or nature. The realms of society which give rise to scientific problems and at times to scientific answers will have their own quasi-independent history, such as the history of religion and of art, of craft and of war. Each acts on each, but each may be analyzed to the point that its ultimate origin and the origins of many of its historical developments are not self-explained. Engels remarked that "unfortunately it has become the custom in

Germany to write the history of the sciences as if they had fallen from the skies."<sup>2</sup> For him and for Marx, a basic plurality of self-perpetuating causes seemed to deny the facts of history. The facts of history were mystifying, inexplicable, irrational, "fallen from the skies," unless the origin of cultural institutions was understood. And since this origin was to be sought in a human social activity, it required one that could be self-causing from the earliest stage of human existence. Such a social activity is human labor, and the mainly independent process of history is the development of the laborious techniques of production of goods, while the corresponding historical behavior of men lay in the social relations of men in the process of production.

The tools of Marxist social science are, then, (a) critical analysis of the problem to be solved, its formulation, its terms of reference, its genesis; (b) detailed historical specification of the problem, translating unreal abstractions by showing the particular circumstances of their relevance and, hence, changing them into concrete empirical concepts; (c) empirical postulation of the self-generating development of the productive forces of societies, in contrast to the dependent development of other aspects of human life; and (d) a further empirical generalization, confirming the somewhat speculative Marxian inheritance from the philosophy of Hegel, that historical development is the result of conflicts among men, their social-economic status impelling them to have irreconcilable interests, that the struggle of competitive social classes is the dynamic force leading to social change.

The general statement of historical materialism which has been taken as classic is that of Marx:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political, and intellectual life-process

2. In a letter to H. Starkenburg, dated London, 25 January 1894. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*, letter 229, p. 517. Translated with notes by Dona Torr. New York: International Publishers Co., 1942 (Marxist Library, Vol. XXIX).

in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness; on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained rather from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore, mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the task itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.<sup>3</sup>

#### DIALECTIC

It is difficult to recognize historical dominance of class struggle in periods of history which are studied only from their chronological records. Nor is it an obvious feature to the statistical gatherer of the facts of a certain moment, or year, or decade. Society, taken in cross section, can be sliced in many ways, each suitable for its own purpose. The middle-class shopkeeper is not only the hirer of his clerks, for he is also, perhaps, a father and husband, a theater-goer, a Negro, a Methodist, a minor gambler, an extroverted storyteller, and a bird-watcher. The significant factor in social affairs can be apprehended through a dynamic approach only. This approach contrasts sharply with that positivistic patience with detail but impatience with dynamic theory that marks so much social analysis

3. Karl Marx, from the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 11-13. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1904; or in *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 356-578. New York: International Publishers Co., n.d.

of our age. Even the few non-Marxist attempts at a perspective in time are frequently marred by use of models whose ideal behavior, in contrast with social reality, show long-term stability and short-term cycles. However adequately cyclical analysis may seem to reveal temporal change, it reduces to repetitive and mechanical clumps of rigidity which deny that there is really a history. To Marx, the inadequacy of such analysis was overwhelmingly evident. Each economic depression, each abortive nineteenth-century revolution, each industrial advance, each political constitution was new and deserved critical analysis. His great methodological postulate of analysis, namely, the dialectical nature of all development, seeks to preserve this existential novelty of things and events while comprehending the unifying source and reason for their creation.

Originally signifying the intellectual achievement of vigorous searching debate, the dialectical conception came to its climax in the extreme use of logic by German philosophers. The heart of the matter is that logical thought, far from flowing in a free stream of consciousness, is disciplined to flow in a rigorous fashion, one step entailing the next, one stage containing within itself the steps leading to the next stage. Since laws of rigorous necessity connect these stages of thought, we cannot look to the pigeonhole collections of the laws of empirical facts to provide the entailment process. After all, we always can ask, "why?" of any empirical law: All crows are black; why? All things fall; why? Mass-energy can be neither created nor destroyed; why? It would seem that logical necessity must rest inside the thoughts, within the ideas, and not be patterned after the statistical probabilities and the ultimately unanswered why of observation. This internal relationship becomes, in Hegel's philosophy, the relation of opposites. It is, paradoxically, negation (and not, as one might psychologically have assumed, affirmation) which provides the power for Hegel's engine of logical development. In its barest statement, this is the question of how things as they are can transform into things as they will be, while remaining somehow recognizably the same things. The acorn and oak are yet the same entity, despite the thorough changes of growth. Thus we are puzzled by the opposition of permanence and change, or the co-existence of identity and difference. If all things are both like and unlike all other things, we have the question at once of unraveling



those respects in which they are indeed alike and those in which they are different. Those in which they differ are the interesting ones. For Marx as for Hegel, the future is forged in the furnace of the present, out of the mutual and necessary opposition of present factors. Hegel sees these present factors as logical contradictories, inadequate for a reasonable man's mind to conclude with.

Marx sees the opposed factors as actual facts. They are historical forces, basically unstable and explosive, and intrinsically in opposition. Some dialectical oppositions are philosophical in the extreme, requiring much subtlety of analysis; we think of the tension between individual and society, each incompletely known without the concept and science of the other.

Others are plain as day: The factory-owner cannot be treated in theoretical terms without his opposite, the factory-worker, nor can the worker in turn be understood without consideration of the owner. Their interests are opposed, for the basic principle of the privately owned factory system is the maximizing of financial profit on investment, while the worker's interests are simply to sell his working skills at the highest price per hour or per product. Taken historically the factory-owner appears first, and, by several processes, the hitherto minute class of those who work for money wages is enormously increased, largely be it noted by foreclosure and other economic actions on the peasant and small agricultural population. But the inchoate and ignorant mass of bewildered new factory men, women, and children<sup>4</sup> developed their own consciousness of their novel social situation. They acted upon this consciousness in one way or another depending, as always, on the specific circumstance, forming labor unions here, wrecking the labor-saving, factory-spawning machines there, becoming political in Germany, anarchically antipolitical in Spain, and unpolitically business-like in the United States. But they are, at any rate, educated by their experience, react to it, react indeed upon it.

The change in the socioeconomic behavior of the society of the ruggedly individual capitalist is due, in part, therefore, to the very labor force which his capitalist institution, the factory, must have.

4. See, for example, J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Bleak Age*. Middlesex, England, and Baltimore, Maryland: Penguin Books, 1947; and Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1950.

The factory system is one of socially organized production, whereas the crafts of an earlier age were mainly the scene of individual production. In both cases the productive means are owned by individuals, and the profits and losses accrue to the individual owners; but in the capitalist economic order, the products of human labor are appropriated by those who own the instruments, the buildings, the raw materials, but who do no producing. We have then a historical conflict which not only exists in principle but also erupts, on occasion, into violence, a conflict between a socialized production and a capitalist appropriation. The capitalist social relations have their own origin and justification in the earlier institutional forms of individual production and individual marketing. "In this contradiction, which gives the new mode of production its capitalist character, the whole conflict of today is already present in germ. . . . The contradiction between social production and capitalist appropriation became manifest as the antagonism between proletariat and bourgeoisie."<sup>5</sup> Then as the history of capitalism unfolds, these productive facilities become concentrated in fewer hands, the contradiction becomes more intense. The further contribution of Marx at this stage in the analysis is his denial that gradual evolutionary change may be at all likely. For the conflict is between the irresistible force of changing productive techniques and the immovable object of institutions, immovable because the basic social structure of the capitalist society, the class interests of the capitalists themselves, rests on the preservation of private property. Without private property there can be no capitalist; with it there must be conflict. When sufficiently intense, this conflict will entail social disintegration or fundamental social change. Perhaps the most symbolic of these Marxist reflections upon the paradoxes and conflicts of the capitalist order is its attention to that phenomenon unique in human history: starvation, poverty, and unemployment caused by overproduction.

#### FREEDOM AND TRUTH

Is man free? Can the science which sets forth the laws that bind the development of human society be the same intellectual instru-

5. Friedrich Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)*, Part III, chap. ii, pp. 296-97. New York: International Publishers Co., 1939 (Marxist Library, Vol. XVIII).

ment which will set man free? As always, Marx approaches this contrast in terms of historical genesis, dialectical development, and ongoing synthesis. How, indeed, can man be subject to objective impersonal law, even as a rock in its motion or a sunflower seed in its growing, and yet be a creature of progressive self-control and developing freedom? The answer, for Hegel, lies in a new and essential characteristic of the human species, its consciousness. The sunflower knows not what it will become nor how it is proscribed in its growth. "Man knows that he is limited by (external) nature, but, in knowing it, he is already partly free."<sup>6</sup> To our earlier question, "How do we know?" we preface the observation that it is a preliminary fact that we do, in fact, know. Perhaps the most distinguishing aspect of this human quality is that it is a relation between knower and the known, that it unites them. Whatever the other faults of Western thought may have been, none strikes deeper, in the eyes of Marx and Hegel, than the artificial separation of the knowing subject from his known object. Indeed, for the idealistic philosophy of Hegel, this yawning dualism between man and his known world was to be overcome as an act of a subjective reasoning mind, unfolding through internal implications to encompass the entire qualitative richness of the objective world.

For Marxism, knowledge is only a partial step to freedom. However, the character of knowledge reveals upon analysis the direction of the next step. Bacon's aphorism correctly relates knowledge to power over factual matters precisely because "the question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory, but is a practical question."<sup>7</sup> The truth and the power lie in the creative act of knowing. Knowledge is not contemplative, passive, the plaything of leisure relaxation. So far as it is such, it is incomplete and corrupt. The experimental method of natural science

6. Otis Lee, *Existence and Inquiry*, Part II *Dialectic*, Section 3, *The Course of Inquiry*, p. 131. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949. This extraordinarily lucid and perceptive book is not sufficiently known, either to philosophers or other thinkers and teachers. It provides a searching exposition of the basic alternatives of thought in the modern world, analysis, dialectic, and pragmatism, and in the course of his discussion, Professor Lee wrote a stimulating, critical account of the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism (pp. 152-88).

7. Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, II in appendix to the U.S. edition of *The German Ideology*, p. 197. New York: International Publishers Co., 1939 (Marxist Library, Vol. VI).

is witness to this creative involvement of the knower, the scientist, in the world he knows. Even more striking is the continuation of revolutionary changes caused by the technology of the industrial capitalist. Writing in 1848, Marx and Engels estimated that the "bourgeoisie, during its reign of scarce one hundred years has created more powerful and more stupenduous forces of production than all preceding generations rolled into one. The subjection of the forces of nature, the invention of machinery, the application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steamships, railways, electric telegraphs, the clearing of whole continents for cultivation, the making of navigable waterways, huge populations springing up as if by magic out of the earth—what earlier generations had the remotest inkling that such productive powers slumbered within the womb of social labor?"<sup>8</sup> Scientific inquiry reveals the laws of nature, and, by grasping these laws of necessity, man has changed himself and his world. A famous phrase summarizes this view: Freedom is the recognition of necessity.

Man's knowledge of nature and the power it begets are incomplete. Consciousness of the objects which make up his environment must be joined with self-consciousness. From Bacon we must return to Socrates: Know thyself. But of course the individual and social nature of man is no easy object for study. Nor are the various facets of human culture, being themselves but the institutionalized projections of the human spirit, free from the laws of individual development. Hence, knowledge of ourselves and our society, which is the prerequisite to control over ourselves and our society and which is itself a cultural phenomenon, is a social product. The sociological determination of culture, and especially the sociology of knowledge, leads to the most pervasive relativism. A scientific inquiry into the sources, function, and pattern of philosophy itself is called for. And the Marxist can never compromise his understanding that the determination of human thought and feeling, like our illustration of the history of science, is not one of internal causation of thought by thought. The determining factors lie in the basis upon which society rests, the life needs, the productive techniques, the

8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Part I, p. 31. Critical annotated edition, prepared by D. Ryazanoff. New York: International Publishers Co., 1930.

forms of the struggle for existence. Man makes his own history, but the way he does so flows from his consciousness, and his consciousness is no independent thing but itself a social historical product. "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness."<sup>9</sup>

How then can this superstructure of culture, knowledge, philosophy, science, arts, religion, ethics, law, and social relations be evaluated? No doubt, the doctrine of historical progress will, in Marxist terms, imply the lessening of spiritual illusion along with the establishment of material improvement. The illusions are historically caused, often appropriate reactions to the human situation at their genesis. But the recurrent retreat into the illusions of ideology plays the same conservative role as does the persistent maintenance of private property relationships in an economic era of socially-integrated production. To determine what conditions in the economic basis will provide the necessary conditions for realism and truth in the cultural superstructure remains, today, a difficult empirical question for social scientific analysis. Moreover the analysis will not be satisfactory until the social factors which determine the social scientist himself are known to him. A society which can achieve truth is one in which its scientists know their own determinants. And yet men in class-distorted societies glimpse truths. Here Marxism decisively breaks with other doctrines of the social relativism of culture, and especially of ideas,<sup>10</sup> for the non-Marxists generally hold a pragmatic criterion of truth as merely usefulness. For Marx, however, there can be no separation between utility and truth, and moreover there can be no doubt that every ideology has satisfactorily dealt with the external necessities of nature and society which pressed upon its believers. To reach the stage where the truth of science will substitute for the quarter-truths of ideological beliefs, we must first reach the stage where the economic conditions which have limited all past ideologies have been transcended. Now the answer is clearer, for we have seen that Marx's

9. Karl Marx, from the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

10. See, for the sociology of knowledge, the comprehensive discussion by Robert K. Merton, "The Sociology of Knowledge," reprinted as chap. viii of his *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1949.

historical studies led him to conclude that there are two restrictive and inescapable influences on man: Man is oppressed by nature, and men are oppressed by other men via the relations of social classes. Overcome these, and truth can be reached.

Religion and ideological distortions of other kinds, as well as science, reflect the stages of human society. Religion and science arise from the magical error that an illusion of control will yield actual control. Religion develops the illusory response to man's impotence, science the creative hope of man's power. But the reason that religion continues the theme of impotence, and correctly too, is that civilized man can no more control his society than primitive man can control nature. When man becomes self-conscious, indeed class-conscious, he is at that moment becoming a scientist of society. In the critique of religion will be found the start of Marx's philosophy, that is, in the realization that religion has been simultaneously (a) the emotive outcry of real misery, (b) the idealistic formulation of a protest against human misery, and (c) the persistent instrument for deflecting men's minds from the actions necessary to remedy their misery.

Religious misery is, on the one hand, the expression of actual misery, and, on the other, a protest against actual misery. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the people's opium.

And again,

The removal of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for its real happiness. The demand that it should give up illusions about its real conditions is the demand that it should give up the conditions which make illusions necessary. Criticism of religion is, therefore, at heart a criticism of the vale of misery for which religion is the promised vision.<sup>11</sup>

Man can now, in the twentieth century, overcome the main feature of his subjection by nature. The uniqueness of our present miseries, the farcical tragedy of having too much abundance provides our opportunity. Moreover, the present time witnesses, at long last, a social conflict whose outcome may provide the end of

11. Quoted from Marx, *Introduction to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* in John Lewis, "Communism, the Heir to the Christian Tradition," an essay from that remarkable collection by Christian and Communist thinkers, *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, p. 491. London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

social conflicts. The dialectical result of the history of class-struggles is the emergence of the proletariat of modern industry and their allies in economic imperialism, the colonial peasantry. Their goal is not class dominance, for their victory will see an undivided society, a classless society. Whatever may be the ideological distortions of the future society, it will have achieved the historic goal of freeing mankind from the hitherto universal fetters of class-struggles. In the realm of ideas, it will have lifted the veil of illusion that has clouded human vision. Men will no longer be prey to historic laws beyond their control; they will be able to begin to create their own history, with respect to which all previous human affairs will seem to have been, in Engels' words, merely prehistoric and prehuman. The long struggle for a classless society is the search for the economic means and the social relations which will abolish the exploitation of men by men. It is necessary to express this in a positive way too. It has been the struggle to permit man to be himself, whole, active, spiritual, freely creative, self-controlled, critically self-conscious, happy, and, in no mawkish sense, a comrade and brother to his fellow-men.

#### THE ACTIVE MAN

The view that the essence of man will be realizable by the socialist revolution provokes the inquiry, "What was nonhuman about man's estate in class society?" We should expect that the impact of the division of labor in class societies will be reflected in man's behavior and in his mental life. Moreover, his behavior, upon analysis, should lead us to the same conclusions about his nature as analysis of his culture would.

Marxism will admit no dramatic miracles, no creations from the void, and it is characteristic that Engels should write a chapter to explore the origin of the human essence. The essence is often obscure in Western thought. Is man's nature and goal to be a creature of reason? Is he distinctively a social animal, whatever that characterization might imply about the kinds of society? Is he distinctive in that he can laugh? or can know? or can know himself and the future? Is it that he can love? or senselessly destroy? Or are these all derivative from some less abstract and less isolated notion than they are? The title of Engels' chapter is "The Part Played by

Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man"<sup>12</sup> and we find Marx's own perception in another of his pregnant aphorisms: "But the essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each separate individual. In its reality it is the *ensemble* of social relations."<sup>13</sup> What we can find by scientific examination of man's history is the distortion of human nature, not some eternal nugget of ideal but hidden humanity, waiting, perhaps seeping through the distorting walls, like some water under pressure. Only from the historical trends may we philosophize about the essence of the human species. The nature of man has a minimum which thrilled Marx and Engels to the core: He is blessed with the biologically evolved equipment to fashion his natural environment more or less as he wills, by his own creative laboring efforts of mind and hand.

The normal existence of animals is given by the conditions in which they live and to which they adapt themselves—those of man, as soon as he differentiates himself from the animal in the narrower sense, have as yet never been present, and are only to be elaborated by the ensuing historical development. Man is the sole animal capable of working his way out of the merely animal state—his normal state is one appropriate to his consciousness, *one to be created by himself*.<sup>14</sup>

Recognizing the noble function of labor, we turn to the vast succession of stages of labor. For, from a primitive stage of family or small-group life in which harsh conditions and little knowledge compel all to labor, incessantly and with neither special knowledge nor special privilege, men have gone on to live in societies of social classes. It is the effect of the social division of labor that we want to examine. And here is the most compelling example of the dialectic as an analytic tool. Labor is the very touchstone for man's self-realization, the medium of creating the world of his desire; and it is labor which should make him happy. Indeed, the essence of man is in his striving to achieve his desires. He is not provoked into learning and achieving by the pragmatic stimulus of an external threat. He labors to transform his world, to put his own mark on it, to make it his, and to make himself at home in it. By the specializing effect of the division of labor, and by the technological

12. Friedrich Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, chap. ix. New York: International Publishers Co., 1940.

13. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, VI, *loc. cit.*, p. 198.

14. Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 187.



knowledge stimulated from age to age, man's labor has produced a thousand-fold and again a thousand-fold greater output. He has mastered nature. But he has lost his essence in the process. He has been de-humanized, for he has become divided from himself. We read in Marx's earliest writings:

[The worker] first feels he is with himself when he is free from work and apart from himself when he is at work. He is at home when he does not work, and not at home when he does. His working is, therefore, not done willingly but under compulsion. It is forced labor. It is, therefore, not the satisfaction of a need, but only a *means* for the satisfaction of wants outside of it. [In consequence], man, the worker, feels himself acting freely only in his animal functions like eating, drinking, begetting . . . whereas in his human functions he is nothing but a [work] animal. The animal becomes the human and the human the animal.<sup>15</sup>

The worker is alienated from his work. He is considered as a unit of labor costs, a factor in the cost of production, in a word, as a saleable commodity. Hence he becomes, for his society, a thing. And, in this topsy-turvy fashion, that which exchanges for things (and hence for labor) receives the highest respect. Money has value, human labor has a price. Money talks. Men are a means, not an end. The effect of this reification of human labor is the abstract concept of an economic man or, more sharply phrased, the concealment of the human relations in the economic order. What Marx called the fetishism of commodities arises in the social nature of capitalist production. The individual makes contact with his fellow worker only through the exchange in the market and, hence, directly between products, only indirectly between producers. To man in the final stage of specialized labor, that of the capitalist factory system, "the relations connecting the labor of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as what they really are, material relations between persons and social relations between things."<sup>16</sup>

The many effects of the alienation of man from himself and his society can be listed:

15. Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* as translated in Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, p. 277. New York: Oxford University Press, 1941.

16. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 44. Translated by S. Moore and E. Aveling. Edited by F. Engels. New York: International Publishers Co., 1939 (edition prepared by D. Torr).

1. The division of labor separates the interests of the individual from the interests of the community; here the community is taken to mean the common interests of all individuals who have social intercourse with one another.
2. In the crudest manner, it has split the several human jobs from one another; we may illustrate by the contrasts of happiness *vs.* work, intellectual *vs.* manual labor, production *vs.* consumption; and we remark that the socialist proposal is to reunite these dichotomies.
3. It has transformed the worth of the human person into material value, the money value of his labor.
4. It gives the social relationships among men an independent, uncontrolled existence, to which men are victims; thus the economic crises of the market have directed the decisions and lives of men (and the possibility of their control will be seen to be a central issue between socialists and capitalists).
5. It intensifies with the years, forcing the specialization of function to such a narrow and monotonous degree that man is reduced to being the merest fragment of his potential ability, and he comes to serve as an appendage to the machine. The economist must recognize that this social process treats man as a thing, thereby concealing his human content by suppression. What is necessary is to see that the economic relations of the impersonal corporate market are really between men, and, in the uncovering of these depressing relations among men, one will find the possibility of change.

The change, as had already been suggested, can be attained by actively socializing the social relations to match the productive relations; but the process is hardly Marxian socialism if it rests there. State, or community ownership, is not socialism but simply the old property-ownership principle seized by a new owner. The people must become socially conscious; the promise of democratic self-government can only be realized in the full, mass participation of socialist democracy; men and women must freely recognize the desirability of their labor; and the accelerated achievements of science must finally eliminate the drudgery of necessities, with an accompanying release of universal, creative labor. The promise of the Marxist vision is of man united with himself, his comrades, and his world. And finally we must emphasize that to Marxists this is no automatic and inevitable achievement, for the very notion of such a mechanical inevitability denies the creative human essence. "What we build, cannot be built with passive people."<sup>17</sup>

17. A. A. Zhdanov, as quoted by John Lewis in the UNESCO symposium, *Human Rights*, p. 69. London: Allan Wingate, Ltd., 1949.

## *Educational Principles*

### WHAT IS EDUCATION?

Marxists believe that the classless society will preserve the highest values of preceding times. The old values are not annihilated, but, in the dialectical sense, they are preserved and transcended, fulfilled and developed. In fact, the charge that capitalist society (and other earlier class-ridden societies) tends periodically to nullify the fruits of its own productive genius by depressions or war has a parallel in the life of culture. Class society has produced utopias, ideal visions of brotherhood, and vistas of heaven. Its sons and daughters have had noble thoughts, and in its times of healthy growth its cultural institutions have been based upon principles of humanity and morality. Of course, in its sickness and decay, it has spawned evils to match its economic inhumanity, such as racism, cultural sadism, monstrosities for its young,<sup>18</sup> moronic sensationalism for its adults, varieties of fascism at all levels. But the cultural heritage is tremendous, human greatness bursting the bonds of institutionalized exploitation. The list of writers alone is endless, Shakespeare, Milton, Bunyan, Swift, Byron, Dickens, Shelley, Burns, Blake, and Shaw, to name but a few English authors whose works are cherished by Marxists. What the social revolution will do is, in the most elemental sense, to bring their own heritage to the consciousness of the people. This is only a preliminary, of course, but the denial of full participation in the operation of the economic order has been matched by a denial of experience in the cultural order. Education from the experience and creation of their fellow-men will be a foundation of a free society.

The educational effect of the capitalist order, in Marxist eyes, has been the continuation of widespread illiteracy and ignorance on the one hand and the degradation of the ideal of public education on the other. What is important in this severe judgment is its emphasis on the situation of the *masses* of men and women. Such harsh descriptions may be true even while earnest efforts are made with smaller groups to create a more responsible art, science, and

18. For a sharp attack on American culture as it affects children, written from the vantage point of Marxism, see Albert Kahn, *The Game of Death* (New York: Cameron & Kahn, 1953); and, on general culture, the recent files of *Masses and Mainstream* (New York, monthly since March, 1948).

education. The discrepancy between our massive realities, such as those revealed in the draft rejections of the Second World War, and our undoubted insights into the tasks and possibilities of education seem to be but one more instance of that moral disease of practical hypocrisy which infects capitalism. Its own clichés reveal the hypocrisy: Sunday morality, the man who pays the piper calls the tune, porkbarrel politics, muckraker, free enterprise, white man's burden. The first claim of socialism in the cultural sphere is its cure of practical hypocrisy. At present, we cannot take advantage of the undoubted achievements in educational thinking, for three reasons: (a) The society, with rarest exceptions, persists in material impoverishment of its schools and teachers. (b) Those who reason most acutely about the function and nature of education, whatever their philosophy, have little to do with policy, even less with practice.<sup>19</sup> Finally, (c) our thinkers, even at their most critical reaction to educational procedures, have frequently illustrated weaknesses of their society rather than criticized it. As the nineteenth-century Russian liberal, Alexander Herzen, remarked: "We are not the doctors; we are the disease."

Who shall be taught? What shall we teach? How shall we teach? Who will be the teachers? And who will teach the teachers? The answers to these questions, for any society, would furnish the sharpest analysis of that society. The universal values of a democratic order face each generation anew, to be accepted and lived, or to be rejected and destroyed, or perhaps to be accepted but ignored. Jefferson's words strike at the heart of the democratic sustenance: "Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty." Democracy means mass participation and self-government, and it depends on individuals who are *free, rational, informed, responsible, loyal, and capable of brotherly love*. Surely these are the qualities which should be taught. They imply the goals of schools for de-

19. This may seem too strong for the case of John Dewey, though his most ardent disciples also complain that what is called "progressive" in practice is seldom what Dewey intended. For an analysis which supports the Marxist contention that pragmatism in education as elsewhere is least satisfactory on the most important issues of society, and hence hardly acute, see Alexander Mciklejohn's incisive chapters on the pragmatic episode in his *Education between Two Worlds*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1942.

mocracy. And the great educational thinkers of modern Western civilization have recognized this, in their democratic moments, from the most striking, thoroughly Christian, universal proposals of Comenius in the seventeenth century down to the most recent analyses of the function of education, such as those of Karl Mannheim.<sup>20</sup> There seems to be no doubt that each society must direct its schools, so that a barbaric society will have schools for barbarians,<sup>21</sup> the Catholic society will have schools for Catholics,<sup>22</sup> the Protestant-capitalist society will develop a school tradition for its own purposes,<sup>23</sup> and a democratic society must unashamedly create schools which are partisan to democracy. The enormous difference between a slave society and a free society is not one between the authoritative domination of one society and the lack of authority of the other. It is the quality of the domination which makes the difference. A dialectical relation between freedom and dependence, between liberty and order, between majority rule and minority rights, and between the manipulation of an advertising age and the free assent of a self-governing society will account for human freedom by understanding the sources of freedom. *Freedom arises from an unfree world.* And, to every helpless child anew, freedom must be taught. There is no getting round the insight of Rousseau in his discussion of sovereignty; reversing his sentences, we find him saying:

Only the recognition by the individual of the rights of the community can give legal force to undertakings entered into between citizens, which,

20. On Comenius, see Meiklejohn, *ibid.*, chap. ii, and also the Marxist appreciation by Professor J. D. Bernal in *The Teacher of Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), more conveniently available in Bernal's volume of essays, *The Freedom of Necessity* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949), pp. 161-69; on Mannheim, see *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1949), and also *Freedom, Power, and Democratic Planning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), especially chaps. vii and x.

21. The teacher and parent should occasionally reread Erika Mann's moving account of the Nazi education system in *School for Barbarians* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1938).

22. See M. O'Leary, *The Catholic Church and Education* (London: Burns Oates & Washburn), and the brief but revealing articles by M. C. D'Arcy on "Roman Catholicism," Charles Bilodeau on education in "Quebec," Joseph Vialatoux on "Christianity and Secularism," and the anonymous contribution on "Spain," all in the *Yearbook of Education, 1951* (London: Evans Brothers, Ltd., and the University of London Institute of Education, 1951).

23. Meiklejohn, *op. cit.*, especially Bk. I.

otherwise, would become absurd, tyrannical, and exposed to vast abuses . . . which is no more than to say that it may be necessary to compel a man to be free.<sup>24</sup>

All education begins in compulsion. It will be the singular achievement of the true teacher to convert this to free learning. Every school is initially a hall of indoctrination, but the democratic school becomes the scene of advocacy of ideas to the exclusion of indoctrination with ideas. Every system of pedagogy is "an instrument of national policy";<sup>25</sup> our judgment of the system must, therefore, be a part of our evaluation of the national policy. When the national policy is one of self-government, then it becomes policy to teach children and adults to think for themselves, since governors can never wilfully deny themselves facts and theories about facts. The most rabid censor does not censor himself.

One may put this point in critical fashion. The liberal democrat, in the name of self-government, confuses freedom with license; similarly, the liberal educationist, in the name of individuality, confuses discipline with dogmatic authority; and each, in the hypocritical setting of capitalism, is but following the capitalist himself who, in the name of freedom, confuses monopoly and oligopoly with free enterprise. The confusion hits education with particular strength, for the contradictions of the social and economic order receive their most heightened mental focus on the questions of the young.

The most general form of stating these Marxist reflections has three parts:

1. The inability of capitalist democracy to fulfil its promise of material and spiritual abundance, as demonstrated by economic crises and the disharmonies of class, race, and religion, is also demonstrated by its inability to fulfil our educational heritage.
2. The fulfilment of education means:
  - a) The opportunity to do so, in adequate schools, with an abundance of teaching equipment, by teachers of cultural as well as technical

24. J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Bk. I, chap. viii, in the translation by Gerard Hopkins (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1947, in the volume *Social Contract: Essays by Locke, Hume, and Rousseau*. Edited by E. Barker. *The World's Classics*, Vol. DXI).

25. "Education as an instrument of national policy" is the theme of the report by the presidents of Harvard, Yale, Columbia, and other American universities and school systems, presented to the National Education Association under the title *American Education and International Tensions* (Washington: Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association, 1949).

training, in co-operative enterprise with parents, with an educational profession of social eminence, and throughout all ages and groups of society.

- b) The full transformation of educational practice from its present support of the myths as well as the sins of a class society to the classless education of socialist democracy.<sup>26</sup>
  - c) The union of hand and brain by co-ordinated study and practical experience in the principles, methods, and achievements of science and technology.
  - d) The achievement of democratic practice in the classroom and on the campus, through procedures of self-government, by explorations of alternative paths to truth in each problematic situation, by living experience with classmates from various cultural and economic backgrounds.
3. While genuine education can take place only in a society which is no longer rent by economic class divisions and cultural prejudices, it is, nevertheless, true that the educator who seeks to understand human history and who has come to agree with the Marxist analysis of his own society will find enormous scope for humane social contributions in our own day:
- a) In his attitude to pupils, colleagues, parents, and the public.
  - b) In his conception of discipline, and in his techniques of criticism see later section of this chapter, "Anton Makarenko").
  - c) In his interpretation of history, and his bringing of historical interpretation to the study of literature, religion, arts, and science, and hence in his rendering of the curriculum into a humanity-centered unity.
  - d) In his co-operation with all those who are frustrated by the existing order and who will themselves be freed by social advance of some form, and also with those who, in so many ways and places, frequently unexpected, cherish the promise of brotherhood enough to perceive that brotherhood needs to be achieved in action rather than merely in their own moods.

26. Although the situation varies from state to state, even city to city, nevertheless as myths which are rarely questioned in American schools, one may list the beliefs in: ease of social mobility, freedom of business enterprise, fundamental choices in political elections, divine, or at least constitutional, sanctions for a capitalist economic system, democratic character of the present jury system. As sins of the majority of American schools, one may confine one's self to sins of omission and list: the lack of attention to minority religions, the abysmal ignoring of Negro history and of the contributions of American Negroes to American history, the catastrophic decrease in scientific interest with an attendant quasi-mystic and quasi-hostile attitude to science, the total neglect of explicit training in logical thinking, the tendency to cut off vocational training from the cultural experience of the liberal arts, the enormous vogue of psychological tests and the static fixing of students by intelligence quotients, the frequent combination of fear, hostility, and arrogance on the part of teachers and administrators toward parents' participation in the educational part of the educational enterprise (as contrasted with school lunches, political pressuring, charities, and parents' education).

American sociologists have remarked that we have two educational contradictions at work in our midst. People never tire of stating and applauding that their children are being taught to think for themselves, and yet the same people are terrified when the children do. Likewise, they come to despise teachers who have taught children to think without the fetters of prejudice because these teachers are always "radicals."<sup>27</sup> The underlying truth seems to be that class society needs two kinds of education, and within a nominally democratic framework these kinds still emerge. Discussion of the goals and methods of education, from a Marxist point of view, is also criticism of education under capitalism. Under each system there are many variations, nuances of thought and feeling as well as conditions of social health and social sickness. Sometimes the temptation arises to compare the theory and ideal of capitalist thinkers with that of Marxist thinkers, but this is a false contrast because the Marxist often recognizes the value of the capitalist thought while denying the possibility of its application under capitalism. Far more useful than a sociological investigation is the statement of Marxist principles in positive fashion. The contrast with capitalist theories of one sort or another, and in particular the contrast with capitalist practice, here, in Europe, and in the many economically dependent countries of both hemispheres, will be evident.

#### THE BASIS OF EDUCATION

We return to the analysis of industrial man. The outstanding feature of his *objective* life, in the main, is that he has become a factory worker. The disturbing aspect of his *subjective* life is his emotional divorce from what is so distinctively human, the use of labor to make his world. As a sound basis for education, it would be necessary to have a sound social relation to the labor process. The meaningful and educative value of labor must be re-examined, and yet this is only possible when society is reconstructed. A society

27. Thus, the former Communist, Bella Dodd, revealed the supposedly heinous crimes against American children committed by Communist teachers by the following answer to a query as to her purpose in life when a Communist: "My purpose at that time—I thought my purpose was to create an open mind, to create a clear-thinking people—people who would throw aside all preconceived prejudices, all preconceived thought. My thought was to teach people how to think." (From record of the U.S. Senate subcommittee on internal security, "Subversive Influence in the Educational Process," January 2, 1953, p. 18).



which harmonizes its productive forces with the human relations involved with productive technology is alone able to practice the social harmony of all its people. Likewise, only in a genuinely equalitarian and co-operative society can education become a constructive force and the equal development of all potential abilities be realized. Only then can the breach between intellectualism, abstraction, ideals, and theory, on the one hand, and practice, technology, science, and realities, on the other, be healed.

In a society in which work is honored and none live without labor, education will be linked with the actual mastery of the material environment. It is worth quoting Marx at some length on the basis of education for industrial man:

Paltry as the education clauses of the Act (British Factory Act of 1864) appear on the whole, yet they proclaim elementary education to be an indispensable condition to the employment of children. The success of those clauses proved for the first time the possibility of combining education and gymnastics with manual labour, and, consequently, of combining manual labour with education and gymnastics. The factory inspectors soon found out by questioning the schoolmasters, that the factory children, although receiving only one-half the education of the regular day scholars, yet learnt quite as much and often more. . . . From the Factory system budded, as Robert Owen has shown us in detail, the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labour with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.

The varied, apparently unconnected, and petrified forms of the industrial processes now resolved themselves into so many conscious and systematic applications of natural science to the attainment of given useful effects. Technology also discovered the few main fundamental forms of motion, which, despite the diversity of the instruments used, are necessarily taken by every productive action of the human body; just as the science of mechanics sees in the most complicated machinery nothing but the continual repetition of the simple mechanical powers.

Modern Industry never looks upon and treats the existing form of a process as final. The technical basis of that industry is therefore revolutionary, while all earlier modes of production were essentially conservative.

"Modern Industry . . . through its catastrophes imposes the necessity of recognising, as a fundamental law of production, variation of work, consequently fitness of the labourer for varied work, consequently the greatest possible development of his varied aptitudes. It becomes a question of life and death for society to adapt the mode of production to the normal functioning of this law. Modern Industry, indeed, compels society,

under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of to-day, crippled by lifelong repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers.

One step already spontaneously taken towards effecting this revolution is the establishment of technical and agricultural schools, and of "écoles d'enseignement professionnel," in which the children of the working-men receive some little instruction in technology and in the practical handling of the various implements of labour. Though the Factory Act, that first and meagre concession wrung from capital, is limited to combining elementary education with work in the factory, there can be no doubt that when the working class comes into power, as inevitably it must, technical instruction, both theoretical and practical, will take its proper place in the working-class schools. There is also no doubt that such revolutionary ferments, the final result of which is the abolition of the old division of labour, are diametrically opposed to the capitalistic form of production, and to the economic status of the labourer corresponding to that form. But the historical development of the antagonisms, immanent in a given form of production, is the only way in which that form of production can be dissolved and a new form established. "Let the cobbler stick to his last"—this gem of handicraft wisdom became sheer nonsense, from the moment the watchmaker Watt invented the steam-engine, the barber Arkwright, the throstle, and the working-jeweller, Fulton, the steamship. (John Bellers, a very phenomenon in the history of political economy, saw most clearly at the end of the 17th century, the necessity for abolishing the present system of education and division of labour, which beget hypertrophy and atrophy at the two opposite extremities of society. Amongst other things he says this: "An idle learning being little better than the learning of idleness. . . . Bodily labour, it's a primitive institution of God. . . . Labour being as proper for the body's health as eating is for its living; for what pains a man saves by ease, he will find in disease. . . . Labour adds oyl to the lamp of life, when thinking inflames it. . . . A childish silly employ leaves the children's minds silly." Proposals for raising a college of industry of all useful trades and husbandry. London, 1696, pp. 12, 14, 18.)<sup>28</sup>

Hence we can understand why Soviet theory has stressed the role of the workshop, the laboratory, and the relations of the school to the local community, to the local factory, to the nearest co-operative farm, to the larger provincial and even national in-

28. Karl Marx, *Capital*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 488-89 and 492-95. For the programmatic use of these principles, see, for example, V. I. Lenin, *Materials Relating to the Revision of the Party Programme*, section on the proposed state constitution in *Selected Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 118-19. New York: International Publishers Co., 1943.

dustrialization projects, and to the vast agricultural and reforestation schemes. There is no conflict between the understanding of the principles of science and an immersion in the problems of the local manufacturing plant; on the contrary, the latter (or its reflection in the problems of the school situation) are the basis for the pupil's personal involvement in scientific understanding.<sup>29</sup> In the process of his twelve years of public education, the student will become acquainted with the reality and the scientific basis of the fundamental forms of social production, the techniques and basic tools as well as the mental skills and theoretical understanding. And he will have teachers who break decisively with all purely verbal methods of passive education. The twin evils of pure verbalism and pure vocationalism will, in this manner, be avoided. They are so evident in American schools, appearing now as the shop course, or as the vocational trades or secretarial curriculum, now as the college preparatory but technologically illiterate high-school or private preparatory-school curriculum, now as the Great Books program in adult education, now as the technical improvement program for adults in one trade or other. It is necessary that these evils be avoided by denying the values of neither practical nor theoretical education, of neither practical citizenship nor liberal and humane arts.

To the maxim that all teaching be organized about the recognition and practice of human labor is added the principle that education should be based on the purposive, creative, and independent act of the pupil. It is necessary, in utilizing the creativeness of each boy and girl, to avoid any idealization, and in particular to avoid the creation of a sentimental utopian school community, unattached to the world for which all education is a preparation. More than a preparation, education can become a guide for the world itself. The school turns outwards to the world instead of inwards in itself via traditional or utopian progressive lines. As the eminent French Marxist physicist, Paul Langevin, expressed this:

An organic liaison between the school and its surroundings. . . . The school should unite with nature and with life, often leaving the walls of

29. See the article on "Science Teaching in General Education" by J. D. Bernal, *op. cit.*, p. 135, for stimulating suggestions, and also the textbook by I. B. Cohen, *Science: Servant of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1949), for a non-Marxist attempt along similar lines.

the classroom to return laden with experience and with observations, to enrich itself with reflexion and meditation, to learn how to record the expression and the representation of things seen, lived, or felt. It should feel itself constantly part and parcel of the outside world. . . . Thus the child's field of vision will widen progressively along with his discovery of his immediate world. This will enable him to find his place there, as well as in an ever widening circle. He will follow the true way of culture which goes from the near to the far, from the particular to the general, from the concrete to the abstract, from individuality to generality, from egocentric to altruistic interest. This is as true of his contact with men as it is of his contact with things. (*La Pensée*, Vol. I, No. 1.)

The importance of the school to a *new* socialist order, faced with problems of construction which are more difficult and complex than the problems of mere criticism, is enormous; and it would be so no matter how the transition to such a new order of society might be carried out. The problems are caused by the novelty of the social relations under socialism. The democratic electoral road to socialism of the capitalist democracies would lead to cultural and educational difficulties as serious as those of the violent road traversed in Russia and China. In every case, it is essential to avoid any pseudomilitant destruction or denial of the previous social order's culture:<sup>30</sup> and likewise in every case the education of those whose major life experience has been under capitalist cultural forms must necessarily be one of respect and caution, of new experience and critical comparison with the old. Hence the peculiar force for socialists of the common sentiment that it is on the young that urgent tasks will fall, and from the young that enthusiasm and fresh intelligence can be expected.

#### POLYTECHNICAL EDUCATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

There are four goals of Soviet education: general education, polytechnical, vocational, and aesthetic. It is important to distinguish these from one another, although their main character is clear. The emphasis on training in the central principles of industry, based on the Marxist outlook theoretically, has been a continuing goal of Soviet education for practical reasons. Lenin's slogan that communism can only be built with soviets (i.e., co-operative councils)

30. See, on this and related issues, Lenin's speech at the third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, October 2, 1920, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 467-83.

*and electrification* was the sharpest of challenges to a country which had hardly begun to industrialize. Marx's disturbance at the "idiocy of rural life" in the Germany of his time could only have deepened had he been writing of the Russian peasantry of 1917, and *a fortiori* if he had seen the state of the primitive ethnic groups in the Russian empire. The history of Soviet education, aside from a plethora of enthusiastic experiments of all types, shows two principal concerns: (a) the development in children of elemental virtues of the socially conscious and independently active citizen, and (b) the provision of the gigantic quantities of qualified technical workers needed for industrial construction. The entire history is one of educational urgency, marked frequently by sheer vocational methods, at other times by unrealistic communist moralizing, always by a shortage of trained teachers and equipment, but also by historical progress. There has always been an emphasis on care of the children, always attention to the growth of higher education, always enormous attention to workers' education in the arts as well as in the technological skills, and similar concerns for parents' education and nursery schools, for special cultural efforts in the development of previously illiterate peoples of the Soviet Union, for popular science and literature, for cultural clubs and societies at all social levels. The aims are those voiced by conscientious and democratic educational workers everywhere, whether socialist or not, although the emphases may vary: to produce citizens for participation in their society's life with a feeling of belonging, and with the qualities listed in a previous section (see p. 194), as requisite for the participating, self-governing citizen; to prepare men and women for creative enjoyment of life; and to prepare them for intelligent contributions to the production and advancement of the material basis of society.<sup>31</sup>

The role of polytechnical training is significant in that it assists the general, vocational, and civic training without eliminating them. It does not mean instruction in everything and every process; this

31. For a penetrating account of the Soviet views on self-government and democracy, see E. H. Carr "The Soviet Impact on the Western World" (New York and London: Macmillan Co., 1946). See also the several Marxist contributions to the UNESCO volume *Democracy in a World of Tensions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), especially those of H. Lefebvre, P. Sweezy, R. Schlesinger, B. Hovarth, and R. McKeon's essay on "Philosophical Differences and the Issues of Freedom," *Ethics*, LXI (1951), 105-35.

would be a silly and impossible proposal, and moreover it ignores the pace of scientific and technological change. What is needed is understanding of principles, and the curricular problem is to choose a complete set of principles. Such understanding will make workers into intelligent men. As recently as 1952 the demand for such education was again stated by Stalin, in a discussion of the conditions preliminary to a real (as contrasted with, to use his word, a merely "declaratory") transition to communism:

It is necessary, in the third place, to ensure such a cultural advancement of society as will secure for all members of society the all-round development of their physical and mental abilities, so that the members of society may be in a position to receive an education sufficient to enable them to be active agents of social development, and in a position freely to choose their occupations and not be tied all their lives, owing to the existing division of labor, to some one occupation.

What is required for this?

It would be wrong to think that such a substantial advance in the cultural standard of the members of society can be brought about without substantial changes in the present status of labor. For this, it is necessary, first of all, to shorten the working day at least to six, and subsequently to five hours. This is needed in order that the members of society might have the necessary free time to receive an all-round education. It is necessary, further, to introduce universal compulsory polytechnical education, which is required in order that the members of society might be able freely to choose their occupations and not be tied to some one occupation all their lives. . . .

Only after *all* these preliminary conditions are satisfied in their entirety may it be hoped that work will be converted in the eyes of the members of society from a nuisance into "the prime necessity of life" (Marx), that "labor will become a pleasure instead of a burden" (Engels), and that social property will be regarded by all members of society as the sacred and inviolable basis of the existence of society.

Only after *all* these preliminary conditions have been satisfied in their entirety will it be possible to pass from the socialist formula, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work," to the communist formula, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."<sup>32</sup>

32. Joseph Stalin, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, pp. 52-53 (New York: International Publishers Co., 1952). This passage is the third of three conditions. The first two are concerned with (a) continued expansion of production, and especially of the production of means of production, and, of more theoretical interest, (b) the contradictions between the economic productive forces of present Soviet socialism and the social relations among men in present Soviet society, viewed as a cultural lag which can be overcome through critical intelligence. This second point illustrates the Marxist thesis that ideas and mental life can be of independent force, and that the absence of class

It may be helpful to list some practical results of the renewed emphasis on polytechnical education.

(1) It teaches the skill in work which every citizen should have, whatever the occupation he may choose, or change to.

(2) Since electricity is so basic to contemporary industry, the general school must provide the pupils with understanding and practical knowledge of the methods of generating electrical power, transmitting it, and using it in the factories, on the farms, in transportation and communication, and in the home. Polytechnical education in school is likewise a prerequisite before science study in institutions of higher education.

(3) The thorough grounding of modern life in a machinery technology requires that students understand the general scientific principles of function and structure of machines, including the electric motor, the steam engine, the internal combustion engine, the turning lathe, and as soon as feasible the newer propellant devices, and the physical principles of atomic energy, although direct practical acquaintances with the latter would have to be achieved by special means. The former types of machinery are used in the school life itself, for example in the many children's railways, run by and for children.

(4) The chemistry of the most important substances and the methods of utilizing them shall be studied, again by a fusion of chemical theory and industrial practice.

(5) The theory and practical means for understanding and controlling growth of plants and animals, and with it the electrical, mechanical, and chemical transformations of scientific agriculture are also necessary.

(6) Each region, town, or other center of practical activity, such as the railroad industry, should have its own focus of technical training in the school. But it is important that polytechnical education be developed in the full context of general education. The latter includes the principles of the natural sciences, taken as theory, observation, and experiment, knowledge of mathematics and logic,

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division will release men from uncritical bondage to their economic environment. The case in point which stimulated the Stalin discussion is the existence of commodity circulation in the U.S.S.R., and connected with that the existence of small group, or collective farm, property.

and of man in society. While Soviet writers have not dwelt much on the subject, it would seem that the history of science, seen in all its social, economic, cultural, and philosophical ramifications, might be a crucial subject to unify this extensive education. It is science that represents one of the most humane of man's activities, and in the study of the history of science one can develop the themes of the humanities. Science, seen in this light, is the fusion of man's abilities, his labor, his transformations of the world, his release of his own creativities, his social co-operation, his free and ranging intellect, his transformation of himself. And, likewise, in the history of science can be seen all the social and natural forces that help and hinder human development. The study of the development of science (including the social sciences, of which the history of science is one) can be the unifying theme, and also it can be the open door to the arts, to philosophy, to ethics, and to political thinking.

(7) Some thought can be devoted to the general theme of power and techniques. At the technical level this can take the form of a special course for secondary-school students in their final year, based on all the many years of scientific and specialized training, specifically expounding the foundations of technology. Some think such a special course may not be necessary and that it is preferable to integrate technique and science completely, rewriting texts, syllabi, and introducing factory and farm visits, and so forth. In any case, the student will become self-confident, intelligently aware of his role wherever he may work, a better worker, and a better citizen.

The net result of polytechnical education will be the transformation of man as worker. But the ultimate result, as intimated in Stalin's remarks just quoted, and as envisioned in present Soviet, American, and other examples of almost completely automatic factories,<sup>33</sup> will be the nearly complete transcendence of the stage of productive labor. Here the Marxist refusal to become utopian about the future may result in some confusion of present or future educational thinking. For the question, "What is the nature of man?"

33. See, for example, V. Apresian, "The Future in the Present: An Automatic Automobile Piston Plant," *VOKS Bulletin*, 1953, no. 2, p. 33 (Moscow: U.S.S.R. Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, 1953), and the special issue on automatic controls, especially the article by E. Ayres, "An Automatic Chemical Plant," in *Scientific American*, CLXXXVII (September, 1952).



must be answered for the future communist society in positive affirmation rather than by negative criticism of historical conditions.

The implication of this question has been connected with that of another question, "How do men gain knowledge?" This is an open problem for Marxist philosophy, though the most active research in the U.S.S.R. and elsewhere is being devoted to the understanding of psychology, higher physiology of the nervous system, and educational psychology. It is beyond the scope of this essay to indicate more than two obvious points: (a) the materialist basis of sensation and activity will provide postulates for a theory of learning, and (b) neither the individual inheritance nor the supposedly automatic effect of environment will be acceptable as an understanding of the development of the individual child. Neither nature nor nurture will do, for the latter is not a rigidifying limit on growth of the child's humanity and the former is itself being changed by the child and his society. The direction of this technical thinking may be indicated by a brief statement of Pavlov, written in 1930: "The chief, strongest, and most permanent impression we get from the study of higher nervous activity by our methods is the extraordinary plasticity of this activity, and its immense potentialities; nothing is immovable or intractable, and everything may always be achieved, changed for the better, provided only that the proper conditions are created." The result of knowledge that confirms and carries on this impression would obviously be of utmost significance for education.<sup>34</sup>

#### ANTON MAKARENKO

"It would be better for men to be deprived of education than to receive their education from their masters, for education in that sense is no better than the training of cattle that are broken to the yoke."<sup>35</sup>—Thomas Hodgskin.

I shall conclude this essay on the intimate relations between Marxist social philosophy and educational theory with some excerpts from the writings of Makarenko, the great teacher of the Marxist

34. Some references to literature on these matters are given in the bibliography.

35. Quoted from Hodgskin, *Labor Defended*, p. 10. London: Labour Publishing Co., n.d.

tradition, the creator of perhaps the most impressive demonstration of the Marxist view of human nature.<sup>36</sup>

It would be difficult to find teachers to match Makarenko. Nor would it be a simple matter to find teaching situations as depressing in their original character as that which faced him after the Revolution. He was persuaded to take charge of a government colony of homeless children, orphans, delinquents, waifs, toughs, and criminals, from small children to adolescent youths. Equipped with courage and an unbelievable faith in the human material, and with a fortunate ignorance of advanced thinking about "delinquents," he proceeded to demonstrate the potential ability and goodness of the young. The stories of the Gorki and Dzerzhinski colonies have been told in his extraordinary "pedagogical poem" (as he called it), *The Road to Life*.<sup>37</sup>

In it, the reader sees the detailed incidents which gave structure to his thought and flesh to the proposal of Marx that the communal life will educate the socialist man. At a time when it was deemed progressive in Russia to cultivate the pure spontaneity of the child and his learning process, Makarenko was acting on that combination of discipline, understanding, individual growth and community devotion which later became the foundation of educational thinking in the U.S.S.R. Many schools of thought about education would accept these four ideals. What distinguishes Makarenko's method are his views on (a) the role of necessary labor, (b) the character of self-criticism and mutual criticism, (c) the creative role of the collective, growing as a unit out of the raw group, in the education of the members of the group, (d) the social and joyful character of incentives, (e) the positive value of aesthetic tradition, and (f) the sense of the mean.

36. The excerpts are culled from his major work, *The Road to Life*; from the short biography by W. L. Goodman, *A. S. Makarenko, Russian Teacher* (London: George Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949); from an essay by Francis Lawrence, "Makarenko: Pioneer of Communist Education," *Modern Quarterly*, VIII (Autumn, 1953), 234-40; and from unpublished translations of passages from the Russian edition of his collected works, which were graciously made available to me by Mrs. Beatrice King. Aside from *The Road to Life* and *A Book for Parents*, availability of Makarenko's work in Western languages seems to be limited to German editions at present (for which see the bibliography).

37. Translated by Ivy and Tatiana Litvinov. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House; London: Collet's Holdings, 1951.

The following selection of Makarenko's pronouncements may be regarded as illustrative of his thoughts and feelings.

(a) We must teach the worker discipline . . . we must develop in him the sense of duty and the sense of honor . . . he must feel his own obligations toward his class. He must be able to subordinate himself to a comrade and he must be able to give orders to a comrade. He must know how to be courteous, severe, kind, and pitiless, depending on the circumstance of his life and struggle. . . . If the collective punishes him, he must respect both the collective and the punishment.

(b) [Concerning the collectively administered punishment for a theft.] How could I explain that you cannot allow a community to feel itself helpless and weak, and that in our trial today we were teaching a lesson not to the offender nor to the four hundred separate colonists, but to the community itself?

(c) I assert there can be no education without making demands. Personally I arrived at the following principles. In a situation where I was not sure I could make demands I behaved as though I noticed nothing. I waited for the occasion when it was quite obvious to others as well as to me that I was right and I demanded the utmost. . . . From my first collective I did not demand that they should not steal. I knew that here I could not convince them at all. But I did demand that they should get up when necessary. They stole and for a time I ignored this.

(d) I came to the conclusion that, paradoxical as it may seem, normal children or children brought up in normal surroundings are the most difficult of all to educate. They have a more complex nature, make more complicated demands on their teachers, need a deeper culture and a more varied adjustment of method.

(e) I realized there are no delinquents but rather people who have fallen upon hardship. . . . Any normal child in the streets, lacking any help, outside society, outside a community, without friends or experience, without hope, with frayed nerves, any normal child in such conditions would become a delinquent. . . . There are no delinquents but there are people no less endowed than I, with no less a right than I to a happy life, talented, capable of living and working, capable of happiness and creative work. With this realized there ceased to be a problem of re-education. I had the ordinary task of bringing up boys and girls to be real Soviet people, people of exemplary behavior.

(f) No man can live without the prospect of tomorrow's happiness. In educational technique this happiness of the morrow becomes one of the teacher's most important objectives. In the first place happiness itself must be organized. . . . Then the simpler forms must be developed into the more complex, into forms of happiness with a wider human significance. Here we have a most interesting line, leading from the primitive satisfaction of a momentary fancy right up to the deepest emotions of duty and responsibility. . . . One could write a whole book of teaching method based on the organization of lines of perspective such as these, the utilization of those in existence, and the establishment of new and

more worthy ambitions. To educate a man is to furnish him with a perspective leading to the morrow's joy.

(g) [With regard to the agricultural work of the Gorki colony and the technical manufacturing of the Dzerzhinski commune.] Questions of the industrial and financial plan, of technological processes, supplies, work on different components, apparatus, rationalization and control of norms and rates, of staff and the quality of personnel, pass daily before the members of the commune, who are not merely onlookers, but managers who cannot afford to neglect any question, for if they do there will be a hitch in the running of the concern. In the solution of these problems members of the commune find, above all, scope for the application of their social energy, and this is not the energy of people who give up their personal life, it is the intelligent public activity of people who understand that the public interest is also their personal interest.

(h) [Apropos of the need for active human beings.] A good deal of the attention paid to the training of character is wrongly directed, to my mind. It is usually concentrated on the unruly element. This, of course, is highly necessary, but it by no means exhausts the problem; the timid and modest, the little, gentle Jesuses, the column dodgers, the wasters, the idlers, and the dreamers usually evade its influence. Yet these characteristics are in fact as harmful as any.

(i) The accomplishment of joint tasks, mutual assistance and dependence on work of communal importance, these conditions alone make possible the creation of really effective moral relations between the separate members of a community.

(j) I consider this to be the most important aim in our educational work, the sense of the mean, both in affection and in severity, in tenderness and harshness, and even in our processes of law and in our games, our attitude to property and household affairs . . . only according to that principle is it possible to educate human beings, capable of great endurance, and capable too of high endeavor, because only in this way can we truly develop the will.

(k) At the beginning of our revolution, our educational writers and orators spread themselves over the West European vaulting horses, jumped very high, and easily caught such ideals as the "harmonious personality." Later they replaced this with "communist man," comforting themselves deep down in their soul that it was the same thing. Sometimes they broadened their ideal and said we must bring up a "fighter full of initiative" . . . [but] to talk about distant abstract ideals as the aim of education is in the Soviet Union to be wholly unrealistic. There is nothing eternal or absolute in our tasks. The demands of society are in fact limited to one epoch whose scope is more or less clearly defined. We can be absolutely sure that the demands made on the next generation will differ from those society made on us.

(l) [On the demand for integrated and correlated education.] How many headaches we had over this cursed question! The youngsters are making a stool and this has to be correlated with geography and mathematics. I felt very bad indeed when a commission of inspection arrived

and could find no correlation between a stool and Russian language. But then I waved my hand, and I affirmed that there does not have to be correlation.

(m) I already knew that children were not invariably influenced by the purely intellectual conviction that their esteem should be kept for those who showed them affection and kindness. I had long been convinced that the greatest degree of affection and respect on the part of children, especially the sort of children we had in the colony, was shown towards another type of person altogether. What are called high qualifications, confident and precise knowledge, understanding, skill, deft hands, sparseness of words and complete abstention from grandiloquent phraseology and a steady will to work—these are the qualities which attract children in the highest degree.

You can be as dry as you like with them, severe to the point of captiousness, you can give the impression of being completely indifferent to their sympathy, you can ignore them even if they are under your very nose; but if your work is good, your knowledge ready and accessible, you can set your mind at rest; they are all for you, and will never let you down. It does not matter how your skill may show itself, it does not matter in the least what you are, whether joiner, agronom, blacksmith, teacher, or truck-driver.

On the other hand, however kind you may be, however much you may like to chat with them, however sympathetic you may be either in work or play; if all your work results in failure or disaster, if every step you take shows that you do not know your own business, if everything you do turns out to be rubbish or "junk," you will never get anything out of them except contempt, sometimes ironical and condescending, sometimes angry and resentful, sometimes capricious and importunate.

(n) [On discipline and its relationship to consciousness.] Our discipline, in contrast to the old discipline, as a moral and political expression of social relationships, must be accompanied by a consciousness, [not by a spontaneity but] by a complete understanding what discipline means and what is its purpose. . . . First, as an expression of political and moral well-being it must be *demand*ed from the collective that is the immediate community. It will not be achieved automatically by external measures or by occasional talks. No, the community must be approached with direct, clear, and definite demands . . . every pupil must be convinced that discipline is the best way of attaining the aims of the community. . . . Second, the logic of our discipline confirms that discipline places each individual personality in a position of greater security and freedom. Children easily understand the apparent paradox that discipline means freedom. . . . Discipline in the community is complete security, complete confidence in one's rights, in the paths one has chosen, in one's possibilities just exactly for each personality. . . . For this we had our revolution, that our personality shall be free, but the form of our society is discipline.

(o) My fundamental principle has always been: *the utmost possible demands on a person, but at the same time the utmost possible respect for him*. One cannot demand great things of someone whom one does not respect.

We see in these discussions of Makarenko that union of subject and object so dear to the philosophy of Karl Marx, so necessary for the uniting of man's practical intellectual nature with his spiritual aesthetic nature. From being the object of the teacher's intentions the collective becomes the subjective teacher of its own members. Pure spontaneity is the illusion of the liberal idealist; but self-development and self-control really exist after the group has emerged as a community and culture in its own right, in response to an objective demand and objective conditions. From discipline and respect emerge freedom and self-respect, Rousseau and Marx in practice.

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## CHAPTER VII

### *Significance of Existence and Recognition for Education\**

RALPH HARPER

#### *Basic Orientation*

Existentialism is, as the word implies, a philosophy of human existence. It arose early in the nineteenth century in response to a cultural climate in which Sören Kierkegaard observed that men had forgotten what it means to exist. Men had learned what it means to be one of a crowd, to be a mass-man; they had forgotten what it means to be an individual, that is, what it means to die, to suffer, to decide, to love. They had forgotten what it means to stand apart, as each man is born to stand apart, from the rest of the universe and from one's fellows. They had forgotten what it means to stand apart in need of a Judge and Redeemer.

Sometimes Kierkegaard phrased the situation of modern times in this way: Men no longer know what it is to become a Christian because they no longer know what it is to exist. Christianity had become a game, its terminology and symbols glib counters for self-satisfied men who trusted worldly success and organization rather than either divine judgment or personal decision. Kierkegaard and existentialism were religiously oriented from the start. But it is important to note the crucial difference of approach in this religious philosophy. It begins with the individual rather than with dogma or history. Dogma and history can reply to the situation in which human beings find themselves only when they are clear-sighted and honest and vigorous. Existentialism is thus an inductive philosophy, a philosophy in which diagnoses always outnumber prescriptions, however important the prescriptions may be.

Kierkegaard himself illustrated the danger which existentialism

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always runs, the snare of isolation. He set himself apart, in contempt, like Nietzsche, so far from other human beings, that in the end he isolated himself from God's forgiveness as well. But in an age when conventionality means more than individuality—and ours is such an age—the man who fights against mass values is likely to see no way of reconciling group interests, even Christian fellowship, with individual contemplation and decision, and may be tempted to tie himself up in his own subjectivity. Inwardness is self-paralyzing unless it understands its need for other individuals, a need not only to be filled but to fill. A man is a mortal thing, here for a brief while, born by chance at a chance place, affected by circumstances beyond its control throughout its short, uncertain life. What little play its being has is exercised when it makes all the multiple big and little choices from one minute to another. Man is a being that chooses its lot even by refusing choices, that dies, that is passionately interested in a happiness that does not rest on chance and is not limited by death. In this sense, existentialism is unhistorical, concerned only with those features of our life that men have to experience in any age. What makes existentialism a child of history is that too many people in the nineteenth century had turned their whole beings away from what Kierkegaard called their inwardness, to what we now speak of as group interests. Dostoyevsky and Nietzsche, neither of whom had read Kierkegaard, argued in similar fashion.

Today one can be an existentialist without knowing it. It is no longer exceptional to be one, as it was in the nineteenth century. Existentialism is no longer primarily a protesting of man against man; no longer is it a deliberate response to middle-class morality. On the contrary, it has, as Marxists have admitted, become the last stronghold of middle-class consciousness and vitality. No longer is an existentialist, like Kierkegaard or Nietzsche, an isolated self-conscious rebel of heroic or mock-heroic proportions. The hidden inwardness that Kierkegaard fancied and finally rejected for others is now a widespread fact. Existentialism has seeped into the ways of thinking and living of many who would deny it most vehemently, associating the word with a nineteenth-century phenomenon.

For the nineteenth-century existentialists, the key word was "isolation." And subjectivity was largely a matter of individual isolation, by way of personal choice. Neither Kierkegaard nor

Nietzsche emphasized the natural isolation of death and tragedy. Rather, they stressed the isolation of the man who chooses, in a society in which choices and values are regarded as self-evident and fixed. And even the famous homelessness of Nietzsche in a world in which God was dead, came from Nietzsche's deliberate rejection of God, his murder of all previous values. Neither he nor Kierkegaard was obsessed by the thing that obsessed Pascal, man's lostness in an indifferent universe. In this way, at least, Pascal is a herald of Camus and Heidegger, rather than of Kierkegaard. Neither Nietzsche nor Kierkegaard trembled before the menace of chance and unforeseen, unjustified misfortune. Both were, although they did not know it, children of middle-class self-sufficiency and had no sense of the mystery of man's lot in a universe that does not always seem to co-operate. Despite their surface complexity, these nineteenth-century figures were simple, obsessed by the danger to man of a society that, on the one hand, was moved increasingly by custom rather than by choice and, on the other hand, believed in the custom only in so far as it preserved a social stability. Thus, it is no accident that Kierkegaard could say that there were no longer any Christians, only a "play Christianity," while Nietzsche, independently of him, could say that God was dead at last, killed by man's disbelief in him.

It is safe to say that almost no one today is unacquainted with isolation, but it is an isolation usually quite different from the self-confident isolation of these nineteenth-century writers and thinkers. It is an isolation more immediately associated with the great fact which they discovered, that God is dead. Nietzsche had said that hardly anyone knew about it in his time, that, like the light from a dead star, it was long in reaching mankind, but that, when it did, men would be desolate indeed. Our age is an age of private and public desolation, in which we live surrounded, as it were, by dead stars which we try in desperation to light up from afar. But, unlike our predecessors, we are not murderers of God; we were born after the fact. Whereas, for Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, the great historical note of the nineteenth century was the middle-class complacency, the note of the twentieth century is middle-class anxiety. And the distribution of political and technological benefits to the middle-class merely makes the anxiety all the heavier. It comes at a time when the materialistic ideals of the nineteenth cen-

tury are as good as achieved. And this, of all times, is the time for the greatest anxiety, mass anxiety.

What is the cause of the anxiety that no one in our time is untouched by? It is the fact that most men, even religiously oriented men, sense that they are living in a world and in societies and in families that are existing on sufferance of luck and effort. Whatever value and meaning life has today comes largely from fortune, individual striving, and—not least—sheer longing. In the past, religion may have been a matter of accepting a living presence; now it is largely a matter of longing for a presence that carries explanation and justification with it. This is why religions have been revived, through longing for something that man does not have, whose absence makes him desperately lonely and anxious.

Existentialism, like contemporary religion, is concerned with human longing rather than with angelic acceptance of existence. If this seems to belittle its importance, one should ask why longing has come to mean wishful thinking. May not longing be, on the contrary, the best indication of faith and the presence one longs for? The age that distinguishes between longing and acceptance is, let us remember, an age of unfaith. Where religion is active, men experience what Schopenhauer called a "metaphysical need." The stronger the need, the more active the longing, and the more intense the longing, the more capable man becomes of realizing the presence he needs. No one ever longs for that which is inconceivable, although one often wants something that circumstances will not permit. To know what one wants implies acquaintance with it. One cannot want what is not known; one does not know what does not exist.

At the bottom of existentialism is this principle of recognition, which we meet in Plato and Augustine as well as in the Bible. A view of life founded on a theory of recognition sees experience in terms of a wandering and a return, in terms of homelessness and homeseeking. One can belittle homelessness and homeseeking only if one is sure it is not the very character of existence. Man is a sojourner on earth, and whether he believes in God or not, it is clear that he experiences no earthly home that cannot be destroyed. He may be a pilgrim, a wanderer, or an exile. But even the pilgrim has not yet arrived and is indistinguishable from the wanderer except by his faith; he must pass through all the dangers from without and most of

the anxieties relating to his own fortitude from within. Even the saints have dark nights. In fact, those who have no dark nights should suspect that their faith is self-delusion rather than experience. The consciousness and the highest reach of human existence is nostalgic. Existential knowing is recognizing; existential living is homeseking. This suggests that the flavor of experience will be a mixture of longing and acceptance, of the poignancy of loss and the promise of presence, of death and of resurrection.

What forms do men's most precious moments take? Is there any love that is true without its nostalgia, the consciousness that the truest love can and will be lost? Is there any poignancy without the consciousness and the mystery of loss and grief as well as gain and hope? Is there any beauty without its transitoriness, its fading? The beauty that is ever new, that Augustine wrote of, is something to return to, not something we can identify ourselves with. It is within us, perhaps, but still it is not we. Is any act of justice final, no matter how satisfying? No justice on earth immunizes man from tragedy and death. Every act of justice reminds one, hopefully and painfully, of the final justice that is not experienced. The very heroism that the nineteenth-century existentialists were, in their way, trying to restore to modern life is a matter of nostalgia, like all idealism. Nostalgia, in the broad sense, is man's natural index of ends and virtues. It is the recognition built into the human spirit of its own nature, its frailty and its ideals.

To be human, to exist with full consciousness, is to know at one and the same time one's human and one's individual frailty and ideals. It is to recognize them mysteriously in their very absence, in longing for them; it is to want to turn to them again; to return to them. It is to feel that what one wants to return to, one has never even had, except similarly in longing. As soon as a man understands this truth about his nostalgia, that he is longing for something he has never had, he is ready to acknowledge that longing points to the future that is completely open. In this way, the life of choosing, that the nineteenth-century existentialists held up as the life of man, receives its subjective base and, in that base, its goals. It is the homeless man who knows what there is to choose, what there is to be heroic about, namely, home, family, justice, law.

The base of existentialism is disquietude. Call it restlessness,

anxiety, uneasiness, panic, loneliness, guilt, sin—there are many forms of the underlying uncertainty of our being. This is more fundamental than any kind of rational uncertainty or certainty, more fundamental than any temporary experience of love, friendship, or art. If man were not hemmed in by time, if he did not die, disquietude would be temporary, and certainty basic and lasting. But where the indestructible assurance is the assurance of death, disquietude makes up a corrosive base of the personality of man, whether man wishes to admit it or not. And in the stage of history in which we are living, this base has been for the first time experienced by all and disclosed by philosophical analysis. Nietzsche had said that the age in which God died was the midpoint of time, from then on man could live. Nietzsche was wrong, not only because man has not lived well since his time, but because he could not understand that man does not satisfy his metaphysical need, his need for home, without God. In our day, one might say that the age in which men are more aware of disquietude than in any other period of history is also the age in which man, for the first time, knows the character of his existence, without illusions. This is not a question of statistics, that is, whether there is more good than evil in human life. Probably there is much more good, statistically speaking. But as long as life is undercut by the certainty of death and the impossibility of eliminating tragedy, that strange amalgam of guilt and chance, every good is colored by the assurance that it moves in a sea of annihilation.

The heart of nostalgia is the belief in the irreplaceability of the individual—the real meaning of the hackneyed phrase, the dignity of man. But it remains true that every individual is replaced and is regarded by those closest to him as replaced, once he is out of the way. The heart of nostalgic recognition of the good one does not have is precisely an allegiance, a passionate devotion to recognition of a self, one's own self and some other self one loves. And yet—these two words are so indicative of the base of existence—nostalgia arises out of situations in which recognition is lacking and will lead to situations brought about by the requirements of human existence, in which recognition will be lost. How many billions of lives as conscious and careful as our own have already disappeared forever—but not for good? We will be no different. And it is this recognition

that one rebels from and yet has to take in. It is inhuman to accept the total nonrecognition of death and personal loss, just as it is inhuman to believe and to act on the supposition that every man is replaceable. Man's dignity resides not only in his virtues, his freedom, and his justice but also in his belief that no one is completely replaceable. The aim of each individual should be to make this belief function in the world.

The existentialism of the nineteenth century was a call to individuals to make something of themselves worth recognizing. The pathos of such a call was that it ended in asking, in vain, for recognition from a century that understood recognition only as conventional approval. To be recognized meant to be accepted by a group, not for what one is in one's self, but as one of a kind. This is a no less appealing solution now than it was a century ago. But even in the crowd, the individual cannot now escape loneliness and disquietude. It is all too plain that no crowd, no group, has the overall and permanent sanction that can allay all anxiety. And yet, such is the prevailing fear in the twentieth century of nonrecognition, that he who is not known under some category knows himself to be lost, as lost as the individual of whom Pascal speaks, who compares himself to the infinite spaces. But it is no longer the size, the heroism of the individual that will save him; it is the recognition he would like to experience in some lasting form. For the religious existentialist, desire looks no further than the immediate promise of nostalgia, a gain almost bound to be lost. In a sense, existentialism is an assertion of the seeming impossible, a resolution never to betray an individual, a resolution there is no reason to suppose will not itself be betrayed. All joys are nostalgic rather than eternal, including the nostalgia for the eternal. Nostalgia, homesickness, is an index, built into human nature, of goals that are always being undercut in this life but which it is nevertheless inhuman and cowardly not to strive to attain. Nostalgia is an index of eternal presence.

This is the paradox that existentialism cannot do without. It demands an honesty, a charity, and a heroism that no other philosophy or utopianism dares to face. It rejects the pretense of self-sufficiency or of rationalism, the delusive comforts of categories and parties and tickets. It demands that each man remember who he is, a once-for-all being in this world, who has little time to make up his mind

or to pass from the natural isolation of his finitude to relations of love, law, responsibility, and justice. It requires him to act as if men were irreplaceable, because they are really irreplaceable in eternity. It asks more than a man can perform and offers him only the satisfaction of comprehending human nature and of doing to his utmost the apparently impossible. Merely to vow never to forget another person is to vow the unlikely. For not only does the person who vows die, but remembering does not bring him back. Remembering is not a return and is not an adequate replacement. But it may be an indication of what is still present that we may return to. It is human but foolish to forget, even if remembering is not a return, foolish because one should remember the poignancy that is the stuff of one's appreciation of existence.

### *Aims, Values, and Curriculum*

What influence can, or should, existentialism have on education? Is it too difficult, too esoteric a point of view to be widely received? Does it demand too much intellectuality or maturity? Does it have any practical implications in terms of things like curriculums or student-teacher relationships? Is it too special and, perhaps, upsetting a philosophy to advocate, as dangerous as its opposite number, communism? These are real questions and must be answered. One way of seeing how real they are, however, is to ask whether the alternative would be to keep existentialism away from the young, or to reserve it for the intellectually élite. Would those of secondary-school age miss something that is humanly necessary as well as necessary for the times in which we are living? Is it emotionally more disturbing to introduce the themes of existentialism in college or in later life rather than early when youth's resilience can make easier adjustments? Is the problem one of goals and methods rather than of the capacity of the young for assimilation? Anything serious is upsetting if it is introduced carelessly—sex, religion, politics, even "great books." Must education be reduced, in the precollege years, to mathematics and languages and matter-of-fact treatments of literature and history? No one believes this now. Then why promote some values or forms of experience more than others? If values and experience are not to be shied away from, why avoid the typical serious experiences of life in which even young people are



already involved? These questions serve to make one more conscious of the difficulty of excluding anything from a person, no matter how young, who is capable of taking it in. Perhaps the first question is not "when" but "what" the existentialist thinks he can contribute to the total education of a man.

The existentialist does want to educate the total man, not just one or another side of him. And to this extent, much of what he wants is wanted and promoted by other philosophers as well. But what one philosopher wants, another may also prescribe, if not to the same extent. It is the emphasis on one part of education rather than on another that marks the particular philosophy. No one would expect an existentialist to emphasize the study of mathematics as a Platonist might. And yet, it would be wrong to think that existentialism is opposed to mathematics, or to natural science, or to economics. What is the educational ideal or principle that permits an existentialist to advocate these and other disciplines and yet motivates a special contribution? It is this: existentialism is concerned about the unfolding of the individual as a whole in the situation in which he finds himself. This implies two things: first, that there is some sense in speaking of the individual as a whole, of man as a whole and, second, that individuals cannot be considered independently of their situations. The whole man or woman or child, within the environment of time and place that he is born into—this is the object of education, or the subject. The unfolding, the development of this subject, is the end which the existentialist works toward.

If it is the existence of man that holds one's attention, then one cannot omit to teach man anything that bears on this. Existence is not metaphysical abstraction. It is *my* existence, and *yours*, something individual and irreplaceable. It is, therefore, important that one treat it as best one can. It is also not a life in a vacuum, but a life conditioned to a large degree by the times and places in which it has arisen, by century and nation, by culture and family, by politics and science and religion. A man born in the twentieth century has problems which were not problems for a man living one hundred or seven hundred years ago. And existentialism directs one's attention to this fact. But situation means more than this. It concerns the smaller situations in which each man has alternatives, in

which he is relatively free to choose this rather than that, to choose his values and his goals as well as his next few minutes. Situation includes some experiences and moments in which an individual comes up against things that snub him completely, that reject him, that ignore him, that indicate his powerlessness or even his failure to do what he could have done. There are such experiences that every man must not only know about beforehand but must deal with whether he knows how or not. Jaspers has called these, unforgettably, "boundary-situations," because tragedy, death, guilt, or suffering forces one to appraise one's total situation, resources, and values; to appraise and then make some choice or resolution.

These are situations that man has always had to anticipate. No period in history has any monopoly over them. And yet they help define man's historical being, for they relate him to the universe. It is only in the world of other beings that these situations, including that of death, press on one. It is only because one lives among others—even when one is as detached as possible from them—that one affects and is affected by others. Man is a being in the world, as Heidegger has pointed out, and this means more than Aristotle's dictum that man is a political animal. One does not live in a city only. One lives with other beings, human and nonhuman, whom one can, as Augustine said, use or enjoy. It matters very much, therefore, "where" one is. "When" one is living matters also, even to the relation man has to such universal situations as tragedy, death, suffering, and guilt. If man were not a creature of time, change, chance, and body, man would probably need no philosophy at all, least of all existentialism. There would be no problems and no questions, only opportunism. Sometimes it seems as if some philosophers had not realized that man is such a creature. Man may be capable of everything, as the Renaissance philosophers liked to think, but he does not have time for everything. He must choose. And even if man is capable of everything, no individual man is, at least not now. This is another way of saying that, to be a universal man, one must live in a time that does not demand too much and yet permits everything.

What is so noticeable about the present century is that it is overfull of demands, techniques, discoveries, fads, fashions, learning, and yet discourages individuality. There is too much to be assimilated,

and yet more and more there is in the air the impossible demand that individuals try to assimilate everything. To live in such a time, with its ever shifting pressures and seductions, is to court madness if one is taken in by the whispering pressure to assimilate. On the other hand, can one afford to ignore the queries and ideas and achievements of one's time altogether and to burrow into some system or cult of the past? Man is not static, precisely because he is by nature a being in situations; he stultifies and becomes childish or inhuman when he tries to ignore the good as well as the evanescent in the present. He is bound to take his time into account and to make his own choices and selections. So we cannot say that the twentieth century does not pose its own variety of situations, not universal, but nonetheless real. From the existentialist point of view, the present century is a homeless century, in which men have lost the old points of recognition and seek, consciously or neurotically, new kinds of recognition. The several forms of totalitarianism of our time are intended to be ways out of this spiritual homelessness for many millions. The middle-class conventionality, which is just as strong now as one hundred years ago, is another way.

Any suggestion that a man should be known through a category or a label rather than through his character and his capabilities, is a shortcut to a recognition of man in his homelessness. But the existentialist rejects both the totalitarian and the bourgeois group comfort, not because he disapproves of groups—man lives and must live and even find himself with others—but because the main tendency of group recognition is the complete forgetting and denial of individual being, personality, and rights. It is easy to understand the appeal of this kind of recognition. The homeless man feels lonely, isolated, and can, therefore, confuse the symptom (isolation) with its cause and character (homelessness). To break isolation, a man can join a group, without in any way solving the deeper problem of the homelessness that brought the isolation about. For there are two aspects to homelessness: the home and the individual's peace at home.

There are homes—ecclesiastical as well as political—that can provide authority and require obedience only. There are homes in which authority is love and, therefore, encourages love in return. The totalitarian form of home requires allegiance only; the citizen

is not loved, least of all for himself. Nor is he irreplaceable, except as a hero of the state. The middle-class conventionality, which Americans know much better, does not depend on a systematized authority, but rather on the individual adjusting himself constantly to customs and even fads. There is no room for eccentricity in middle-class America, "unless one can afford it," any more than in a totalitarianism. And eccentricity, which in itself is not the noblest of virtues, is forced into a position of empty prominence by the fact that conventionality requires everything and gives nothing. Of course it claims to give protection, but that is never in the least like the attention that a loving parent gives to each child, different for each but equally intended. The homeless man may be fooled into thinking that he needs security only, of a God or a party. But that would only be because he did not know what it means to be homeless or to live in a home.

One of the disturbing things about our time is the tendency to think in terms of antithetical ideas only; in this respect, in terms of freedom or authority. The free man is not necessarily the isolated or homeless man; the security that the latter needs and wants may not be supplied just by authority. Home is not the father or the mother; home is not the place of a ruler, a place where one must fit in and be subservient. Home means values and even a hierarchy. But it means a mutuality of giving and taking, of, in short, caring. Home is where a man should be freest to think and to do. If modern man no longer understands this, it is because he has learned to equate freedom with either movement for the sake of movement or detachment for the sake of detachment. Freedom of these kinds is enslavement, paralysis, emptiness. There is an older and healthier conception of freedom that sees freedom as a means and not an end, as it must unfortunately seem in a time of isolation and enslavement. When freedom is seen as a means, it is not difficult to understand that the free man is the one who is free to find the ends of human existence, free to find the way, free to live in that way.

Existentialism promotes the free development of the total man in the situation in which he finds himself. But by freedom existentialism does not mean irresponsibility; rather, the freedom to commit one's self again and again to values and to persons. There is no conflict between truth and freedom, between freedom and authority, or

freedom and commitment. The existentialist is the man who, conscious of the general homelessness of man and the special forms of modern homelessness, would also know the meaning of the opposite of homelessness, being-at-home. He knows and insists that to be at home is not to be subordinated to either security or authority but, rather, to find security in his free and mutual relationship of affection for and understanding of the values and the persons he has chosen or returned to.

Thus, the end of education for an existentialist is making individuals aware of the meaning of homelessness, of being-at-home, and of the ways of returning. In the strict sense, this means that existentialism is concerned principally with liberal education, freeing man from his isolation and his anonymity, freeing his mind from the confusions that prevent him from seeing his situation and his powers. So much, it has in common with psychiatric therapy. No philosopher today is more concerned with education in this sense than an existential philosopher. Every existential philosopher is a doctor and a missionary, not for some esoteric doctrine called existentialism, but for the purpose of encouraging individuals of all kinds and conditions to understand their situation and themselves. And it is the starting-point of every existentialist that no other modern philosophy has taken the self and its situation seriously enough to make that situation the subject matter of its inquiry. It is for this reason that one so often hears it said that if existentialism has any model in the past, it is in stoicism, in tragedy, or in the Christian religion. The existentialist has a view of man which varies less than is supposed, from one existentialist to another. All existentialists start with the individual who chooses his course and who dies in disquietude. And all of them protest against the forces within man and in his contemporary situation that discourage him from being-at-home, or, worse, from seeing himself as both mortal and responsible. All are actively and specifically concerned with the limits of man's nature and the desolation of his contemporary frustrations or, more precisely, with homelessness.

This is why it is not empty exhortation for existentialism to encourage individuals to know themselves and their time. The existentialist believes that there are certain things, certain truths, which every man ought to know, and which he has all too little time to

know. In another sense, this liberalizing education is vocational. Man is called to know himself; it is not optional and a matter of luxury. It is man's vocation to know himself so that he can live well. With the more special form of "vocational" education, existentialism has nothing directly to do. That is a matter of individual capability and choice, and must be exercised within the framework of the appraisal of human and individual conditions and ends.

The ends are both fixed and relative. Every man should know what it is to be a man, the limits and the powers of man. But every man should also know his own time, both as an individual in a certain confined environment and as a man of a certain century, with its particular problems. To know about and to solve the latter is not the same as to know about the limitations of existence in general. One might say that there are even two kinds of homelessness, that which all men, under Adam, suffer, with the consequences of exile from paradise, in death, guilt, tragedy, suffering, and that which men in the twentieth century experience, a century in which all men feel the effects of the death of God (or, if you please, the death of "European or Christian morality"). Existentialism is concerned with the universal and the historical, and in fact, came into being itself through a certain historical situation in the nineteenth century. It is conceivable that another time may come when, as in the distant past, no particular philosophy will be needed to remind men of their condition and their powers or to teach them the meaning of home. It is conceivable, but not very likely, and not conceivable at all if one believes in some original, primal flaw in human nature that blinds men to what they need most. But there have been times when, relatively speaking, the family was a more stable social unit, when both city and gods offered a stable environment in which individuals could live freely and strenuously, as well as meaningfully.

The present century is one that can be approached, as Tillich has done, through the fact of meaninglessness rather than homelessness, so abstract is modern man's sense of what he needs. But already one sees signs that men understand their trouble to be homelessness rather than meaninglessness, already see the possibility of a concrete goal rather than an intellectual one. In such a time, and for such a flimsy, wanton being as man, it is imperative that education

maintain the highest possible standards, requiring not only what the traffic will bear but even more. The danger, as existentialists who are teachers of nonphilosophical students know, is not that students cannot bear to understand themselves but that one will not give them the chance to understand themselves soon enough. Of course, every effort must be made to judge the receptivity of the individual student and not to ask more than he can deal with by himself. This is another way of saying that an existential education begins as early as any other education, even earlier than school education. No opportunity should be lost to suggest or show or explain the limitations as well as the challenges of life. One without the other makes for either frustrating pessimism or irresponsible optimism.

### *The Educative Process*

The educational process has three elements: the teacher, the pupil, and that which they have in common, the curriculum. How does this process differ from any other relation between two people? Why is not any conversation or dialogue educational? Is there any which is not? Can a monologue or soliloquy be educational? Or does one have to suppose that someone is listening? Is it enough just to suppose that someone is listening? Is it enough just to speak *at* him? What distinguishes an educational conversation or monologue—a lecture—from one which is not educational? Is it the curriculum? But is there ever a dialogue or a monologue from which some kind of curriculum is totally absent? Is it the intention to educate, to affect someone else that makes the process educational? Or is it the result? Is the process to be defined then by its end? How then would one know whether education had been taking place, until afterward, until one had measured the result? But how can one know the result unless one knows what to look for? Is the end, therefore, implicit in the intention?

These are the obvious questions, and they seem to lead each other around in a ring. The way to break the ring is to admit from the start that education is not a special process; only formal education is a special process. But wherever there are these three elements, the teacher, the pupil, the curriculum, there is the possibility of education. Wherever two are together with a third thing, which takes both out of themselves, there is education. And the only difference be-

tween pupil and teacher is that the teacher leads, while the pupil is moved. But he who is moved now may in the next sentence, even in his moving, lead his teacher, who then becomes pupil. It is only when the relation is so set up, formally, as in a radio talk or a platform lecture without discussion, that no turn-about can take place. But this is artificial, and education should be natural. This is the most important thing about education; it is a natural process. And the more clearly one understands this, the more effective even its artificial movements can be.

When one speaks of education nowadays, one thinks first of all of schools, places where specialists deal with skills and disciplines. But who knows how long mankind had to do without schools? And yet this does not mean that man did without education. Even now there are human beings who go from birth to death without schools, without special teachers or special buildings, even without books. But no one goes without education. I am not thinking only of the training by examples which a mother bird gives a baby bird. We should, perhaps, question whether it is wholly proper to connect training by example with education. Is education animal or human? Should one keep this word only for that which human beings do? There are difficulties here. It is tempting to exclude training by example, but might that not mean excluding the training of character? And do we want to separate character training from education? That would leave the function of education more single but also less concerned with the whole man.

Perhaps the way out of this dilemma is to ask whether character training can be fairly associated with the kind of training by example that the mother bird gives the baby bird? Is character, to put it sharply, nonrational? Can a man or woman or child have a character that will stand up under the ordinary tests of life, to say nothing of the extraordinary crises, without having understanding? And this, as far as one can tell, is what the nonhuman animals lack. One way of explaining all this is to say that nonhuman animals have no curriculum, in the sense of something between teacher and pupil which each recognizes as other than himself, as very clearly between or beyond. No bird or rabbit ever remarked as so many humans do, "That is beyond me."

There may be a group dynamics for birds and rabbits, but there



is no education because there is nothing in between. When one trains another, he evokes innate powers by displaying his own. But the human who allows another to do this to him is participating in a fraud. Such is the process of dictatorships of all kinds. And it is a matter of enslavement in humans, whereas it is natural in animals, just because a human being usually has to suppress his instinctive and natural disposition to examine what is happening to himself, to deliberate, to understand, to choose, or to reject. The animal may hesitate before flying off the perch for the first time: "Can I do this or not?" The human being will also want to know, however dimly, a reason for doing it. The smallest child, the tiniest talker, wants explanations. "Why?" "Give me an explanation." "What do you mean?" And the smallest questioner balks until the answer satisfies. For the smallest questioner feels his freedom, his ability to reject as well as to accept. Human freedom is completely tied to an awareness of a realm of being that is distinguishable from human action. Or to put it another way, a human being acts in terms of something other than himself, whereas any other animal acts only in terms of his potentialities. To be free is to be aware of an order of things above and beyond one's powers and needs, an order which may or may not be indifferent to one's self, and to which one may or may not be indifferent. This order appears in various disguises; one might even say, on different levels of experience, as, to put it oversimply, the world or truth.

If man were not a reflective animal, if he did not have this strange power and necessity of separating himself from himself and from all that surrounds him, not just taking in what passes by and reacting by instinct to it, there would be no educational problem. Whatever could be done would be done, instinctively. But man does not have to react in fixed ways. He can judge the world he passes by, as he wishes. He can respond to the world and his own judgments more or less as he wishes. He has the burden and the challenge of reflection and choice. However burdensome the deliberation and the willing, think how challenging the very conception of world and truth is. There is something pathetic—from the human point of view, of course—about the introverted life of animals. They are not only bound to certain patterns of behavior, they have no sense of anything other than themselves to be concerned about. The dog who "loves

his master" identifies the master's interests with his own and cannot see beyond.

The real meaning of human freedom is that it arises from and is directed toward an order of reality which is primarily beyond any human circle. If it were not, man would have to feed on himself as animals feed on their own powers and needs. Whenever men have tried to use themselves as ends, or shrink their world-view to a view of self, their isolation becomes so cramped that their whole reflective apparatus slows down and revolts or becomes paralyzed. The world and truth are the bright goals of free man. This is the reason why the curriculum is so important. And it is the development of a curriculum which involves a view and an estimate of the state of the world and of truth, that marks genuine educational interest. Any other group endeavor or attempted conversation is only abortive education, at best, without substance and therefore without the means to affect character or intellect in any lasting way.

Does this mean that both teacher and pupil have to subordinate themselves to the curriculum? Is this like saying, "The books are our teachers"? Does this demand a systematic notion of truth that has no room for person or interest? Does this mean, in short, that the only educational task is to find and impart the one and only truth? There are educational practices which reflect this—sometimes religious, sometimes political, sometimes just an old-fashioned textbook variety of the A,B,C's. Reading, writing, and arithmetic reflect this view just as much as any catechetical or doctrinaire education does. Whether the guiding principle is the quasi-relativism of Marxist class struggle or the even more rigid scholasticism of some forms of religious education, the role of the teacher is reduced to that of a shovel. And this is proper if human nature had to accept an unfree relation between individual and the other order of reality called world and truth. But neither the world nor truth has a label on it, telling what it is and how it is related to the other. There is no way but the way of individual judgment. Even revelation must be judged, according to its appearance, according to its suitability for the powers and needs that a human being thinks he has discovered in himself. There is no way of being sure that one is not wrong. Every choice involves an act of faith in the rightness of one's position.

For this reason, it is possible to say that there is a world and there is truth; but it is not possible to say that the world is only this or that and truth this or that. Man's relation to truth, whatever some men say, is a leaning toward, a stretching out at, a longing for that which is present but not fully, clearly named. But one of the signs of wisdom in man is his acceptance of this basic difficulty of living. One can experience both world and truth and yet not experience them fully or even suitably. One can even mistreat both; in fact, who does not? But this is better than being mistreated by someone else's view of world and truth as finite and completely transferable. There is such a thing as being enslaved to a curriculum.

One of the dangers in the current American preoccupation with general education is that a general curriculum may be looked on as finite, as known, and as the only end. To say that a man should devote himself to the world and truth is not to say that he should lose self or freedom. In a sense, he should lose himself only to find himself; the curriculum is there for him. Sometimes this has come to mean that the effect of liberal education is the forging of a man who is all instrument. Put him in any situation, and he knows how to ask the right questions, even if he does not already have all the answers. These are, incidentally, two possible results of a curriculum-dominated education. But whether the effect of such an education is to enslave a man to a system or to inculcate complete detachment and mobility, the general result is the same, an inability to commit himself again. Complete detachment is a kind of enslavement, a kind of paralysis too. It is no better to be totally uncommitted than to be totally committed. It is just as inhuman to think of one's self as an analytical instrument as to think of one's self as an answer-box. No decent society can be founded on either type of man. The former is incapable of caring for individuals; he can only care for ideas. The latter is incapable of appreciating the freedom that he has taken advantage of. One does not lose one's freedom in committing one's self. One loses it only in committing one's self to something finite.

In this is a belief that neither the world nor truth is finite and that the educational process, when natural and free, is concerned with an infinite dimension. In practice, this means that the teacher and his pupils have a curriculum between them that can be marked off

in finite terms, as arithmetic is marked off from history, but also a curriculum which cannot be worked out once for all, even arithmetic, to say nothing of history. One can learn arithmetic, but one can also understand it, and there is probably much still to be understood. One can learn history, but even in the learning, one realizes—as the arithmetic scholar usually does not—that a historical fact is itself a product of the historian's judgment and selection. The subject, the area, may be finite enough to prescribe; but the relation of an individual to this area is more tenuous. In contemporary education, the question again being raised is, "What areas are finite and basic?" And this has become a more debated question than the relation of the individual to the area. The great strength of the progressive movement in education was to stress the latter, but at the expense of the former. Those who are now advocating, with as much justice, a renewed attention to basic disciplines and truths also run a risk, that of ignoring the individual's free relation to the infinite dimension within any discipline or body of truths.

It is important to teach everyone to read and write and count. It is important to teach everyone some history and to acquaint everyone with examples and ideals and ideas of other men who have lived well and gladly. It is probably foolish to try to say which is more important; they are equally necessary and, therefore, equally important. The more profoundly men think about human nature and the present course of history, the more definitely their curriculums will reflect their concern. But it would be dangerous for anyone to prescribe books any more than ideas or heroes, as the *sine qua non* of an educated man. This is a danger, not because man's situation is always changing or because no man at any time knows exactly what his situation is anyway, but rather because it is an encouragement to forget the dynamism of the relation between man and the curriculum. The latter is there for man, although it requires a certain period of self-abnegation of the pupil. But even in subjugating himself, the pupil retains his freedom of observation, inquiry, and release. The world and truth are for him to explore, but they are also for him to commit himself to as one commits one's self to a community which not only permits freedom but enlarges the self.

There is a view that the pupil is more important than either the

teacher or the curriculum because it is he who is being educated. It cannot be denied that he is the one who is being educated. But the corollary that sometimes follows is more questionable. Is it true that the pupil is the one to decide what he should learn? Is this not removing at least one part of the teacher's function, if not prerogative? Worse, is this not the equivalent of letting the pupil teach himself, which might suggest that he does not even need to be educated? The pupil pays; therefore, let him say. Or, he is the one who is going to be educated; he better find out what he needs.

Such a view implies either that there are no common needs or that individual needs are more important. If he needs to know arithmetic, let the child find out. But this is just what mankind found out it must know, after milleniums of fumbling. If one is afraid of crushing the little ego, how fearful must one be of human freedom and resilience? No doubt, in our time there are sick or pampered children and adults whose warped view of their freedom will not allow anyone to tell them what they should learn. But this is not only to misunderstand the strength and use of freedom; it is to be unaware of the difference between the finite areas of learning and the infinite dimension within each area. No one is hurt by being forced to learn arithmetic or to read the *Odyssey* or the *Bible*. One is only hurt when one is discouraged from exploring these areas, or from maintaining a critical distance from that which one cannot yet understand. Nothing human is alien to a human being, except the human being who is unwilling to give the humanities, including the religious humanities, a chance. How can one know unless one submits?

Freedom has such rules and ways. And the mind has its ways, too. There is a logic that governs human converse, and it must be learned. Every human being must learn what follows from what is given and what does not follow. He must learn something of cause and effect, of the real intentions and dispositions of the mind, not just his own mind, but the human mind. With different premises, men arrive at different conclusions, often without paying much attention to the method of departure and arrival. But logic, whether broadly or narrowly conceived, is a common factor in thought and intercourse; it is involved in the two symbolic languages man has, word syntax and mathematical syntax. No educator can treat logic and

language lightly and still be concerned with truth. Logic is the mode of man's disposition toward truth and, therefore, toward reality and is as stable a disposition as man's needs for food, for friendship, for morality are stable. Logic, like anatomy, will always exercise an attraction on many minds simply because, in a universe where so much is uncertain, it is at least certain that some ways of reasoning are as inadmissible as some uses of the body.

But to admit that there are common needs, dispositions, and interests is not to deny that every man has his own, or may have his own. And the good teacher deals with these directly and indirectly not only because they must be attended to but often because, through them, he can awaken an understanding of the dormant common needs, aptitudes, and dispositions. The good educator knows that he is educating individuals, not just man, and will use any method that will educate the whole man. The whole man is also not just the individual but is his humanity as well. The teacher may forget more than this. He may forget the pupil altogether, if he is enamored by either his own ego and prospects of fame and promotion, or by the attraction of the subject he is teaching. Is he teaching or speaking to an audience which gives him an excuse to show off? To what end is his performance? Obviously, not every teacher can or should know the day-by-day needs and capacities of his students. And yet, if he disregards the fact that the receptacles of his shovelling performance are all different and always changing, he has only the subject matter or himself to fall back on.

It is all too easy to forget the main reason why one is teaching, that is, to educate someone else. But even if the teacher does not know at a given moment the needs and capacities of the individuals before him, he should know that they and he are involved in a precarious experience between birth and death, fraught with risks, choices, changes, and challenges. To the extent that he can keep this in mind, to the same extent will his teaching be impregnated with a humility and earnestness that will both help him honor the truth and stimulate him to respond to the capacities of his pupils. It is as rare as it is wonderful for a teacher to have vision of time and eternity, of human character and intelligence, but it is absolutely necessary for a teacher to be both honorable and responsive. Many a limited mind has been joined to an honorable and responsive

character in such a way that effective teaching has resulted. What mind is not limited in some way? One cannot expect infinity of wisdom any more than one can expect the curriculum to be pat from beginning to end. But one has every right to expect, because it is humanly possible, that a teacher's character be both honorable and responsive, devoted to the truth of the subject he teaches, and responsive to the minds and characters, the human if not the individual needs of his pupils.

A passionless teacher is a bad teacher. But there are passions that are better left out of the classroom, especially the passion to display one's self. Another is a passion for a system or idea or point of view that discourages reflection. Two normal passions remain: (a) a passion for the truth of any question that arises or ought to arise in the development of a subject matter, the truth no matter how strictly one is forced to review one's previous judgments; and (b) a passion for the end of teaching, the autonomous functioning of the pupil's mind and the habitual exercise by him of a character that is free, charitable, and self-moving.

The good teacher aims to produce, not replicas, but men and women who stand apart from him even more distinctly than when he first met them. The good teacher does not want imitators but, rather, men and women who through their education have experienced the shock of discovering the infinite depths of the world and truth without giving up any of the partial truths they have encountered along the way. The man whose mind is liberated is not detached from truth. Rather, the more he has submerged himself wholeheartedly in the subject matter of his reflection, observation, and insight, the freer he is. A teacher knows that he has succeeded only when he has evidence that his pupils can hold something to be true that he himself is convinced is true, without having come to this truth by imitating the teacher, by reasoning, or by other powers of persuasion, including the persuasion of example. When one sees one's own ideas quoted verbatim, one's heart should sink. But when one sees one's own ideas thought out anew as for the first time, then he is seeing the beginning of a free mind. The time will come soon enough when the liberated mind may go so far beyond the teacher's expressed thoughts that neither of them will see any overt connection between their ideas. It is sad if, at this

point, neither teacher nor pupil remembers that there is nothing lasting that need be imparted except the conviction that honoring the truth and responding to the individual are the foundations of good character.

So in the end, education is education for character, for the habits that enable a man both to remain free and to remain with the truth when he finds it. The more he honors truth and the more responsive he is to individuals and situations, the more a man realizes that every truth is externally a chameleon but internally always the same. All ideas have a closet of costumes. Truth has its disguises, which only the patient and learned mind can detect. Far too much emotion is wasted in public and private life on differences that are only verbally irreconcilable. It is easier to surround one's mind with hedges that others cannot pierce; the good neighbor shares his fields as well as fences with the man next door. It is good to have one's own ideas, one's own approach to common problems; good, because you never know whether you have an idea until you have given it a new costume. But it is folly to forget that others dare do the same thing. Likewise, it is good for the teacher to have vision; it is at least necessary that he know something. But it is even more necessary that the good teacher care more for his students and for the truth he has not enough vision to see perfectly, than for any particular costume of truth.

The prima donna may be suited to opera, but never to education. Education is not theater, although much of what is regarded popularly as successful education is fairly good theater. The performance fades, the vision fades, and only the teacher's attitude toward truth and toward his students remains assimilated or unassimilated by his hearers. There is sometimes point in perpetrating a theatrical hoax in a classroom, but it is justified only when the teacher keeps an ironic distance from his own *éclat* and, sooner or later, lets the students know this. The best teacher is the one who maintains that precarious balance between his devotion to that which is in between him and his students, the subject matter, and at the same time is so responsive to his students that he can switch his method and approach without warning even to himself. Most teachers are too stiffly oriented to their own subject matter and to their students to be able to walk this tightrope. It is, however, an ideal which more



would try to follow if they were aware of it. And there is nothing more exciting for a human being to do or for students to participate in.

Education has delights for the sensitive individual that are seldom fully realized. The student is an instrument to be played on; the teacher, an improviser. The good improviser knows many themes and loves some far more than others. He knows the ancient themes and the modern ones; he may even have thought up some of his own. But his devotion must be, not to his performance, but to his themes and his instrument. The student is worthy of the improviser's hand, not only for himself but also because he is a member of society, because he too can be an improviser. Every teacher is teaching teachers. He has his hand in and, therefore, his responsibility for the welfare of the community outside the classroom.

### *School and Society*

What is the nature of the teacher's responsibility for the welfare of the community? To retail the supposed goods of the community? When the community pays, must the teacher deliver? This is the practice, if not the ideal, in many communities. Few communities would put up with either Socrates or John Stuart Mill. But we are concerned, not with custom, but with the ideal. Does the community have the right to prescribe what shall and shall not be taught? It certainly has the right of the purse string and of ostracism. But this is not a right so much as a temptation. And yet it is also a right, for there are teachers who should be discouraged from teaching, not because they have the wrong ideas, but because they do not know the difference between making slaves of their students and making men free. It is not by ideas or doctrines that one can judge the teacher or the student fairly, but by the habits of mind that students and teachers both exhibit.

In our time the relation between school and community is most often spoken of under the heading of academic freedom, by which is usually meant the freedom of the teacher. It is unfortunate that teachers have not had the wisdom to refuse to let themselves be isolated in this way. The community has not investigated either students or the community itself but has concentrated on the teacher alone. In his defense, the teacher often forgets his strongest argu-

ment, that education involves others than himself. The teacher, like any artist, is a lonely person whose work is too often unappreciated. He must live on the self-approval of his ideals and the self-judgment of his own abilities. When singled out, he is inclined to forget that he is only the easiest target, not the only target, for those who misunderstand what education is about. And therefore, in crying, "academic freedom!" he seems to himself to be crying, "teacher's freedom!" Academic freedom, however, is not solely or mainly the freedom of the teacher but the freedom of community, students, and teachers. As soon as one separates these three, one makes it easy to isolate the teacher's lot. The teacher should not resign himself to self-pity but should insist on the implication of students and community in a common social situation. If a community is not free or is losing its freedom, it will not understand the importance of freedom for either students or teachers. If students are not free, the community will soon not be free either. If the teacher is not free, neither will his students be free.

It might be desirable, although probably rather dull, if men could be right instead of free. History gives little encouragement to such a desire. What history does show is that the insistence on right rather than freedom leads either to a slowing-down of civilized energies or to some kind of enslavement. There is nothing worse than a good idea that is insisted on too much. The community which values truth and progress—they are not incompatible—must encourage freedom of conscience and speech if it is to survive. Truth is not arrived at by majority vote. One man alone may discover it, for the benefit of all. It is only in the realm of action that the experiments of majority opinion are applicable.

So much of what men do, they do with or near others, and laws are needed for the security and prosperity of each one. But laws are guesses, and the actions that follow are tests of their applicability. Since they affect all, they must be made by all. But truth is not made; it is found in the crevices of the mind and heart as well as in the results of action. It may be found by the minority. It is always found, at first, by a minority. For this reason, the quest for truth must be dissociated from majority opinion. I do not say community opinion, for this means two things. The community has no right to suppress the quest for or the expression of truth, but, at times, it does. The community's opinion is associated with the quest for

truth only when it realizes its responsibility for and its need for truth. The so-called problem of academic freedom is thorny today, mainly because the community has forgotten its own responsibility to be free and to seek the truth that it needs so much. Losing its own freedom, it neurotically seeks to make a fellow sufferer of its teaching staff. The students, in between, have been forgotten by both sides.

The community whistles to the teacher; the teacher either comes at a jump or snarls and whines. What are the students doing? They are taking sides, if they are not sitting by in boredom. What they should be doing is reminding both teachers and community that, just as the curriculum lies in between—and sometimes beyond—teacher and student, so the students lie in between—and sometimes beyond—teacher and community. The students will become teachers; they will also become the new community. If the community, which fears it is losing freedom, could encourage the students to elevate freedom instead of curtailing the efforts of the teachers, the students could return to the community a new courage and a new concept of a free society.

The community feels uneasy, dislocated, at bay, betrayed. It is participating in the death of God, spiritual emptiness, in the menace of an expanding political religion that it does not fully understand, and in the unassimilable complexities of technological changes. Faced with the seeming impossibility of assimilating the innumerable ideas, opportunities, risks, and faces, contemporary men look for a scapegoat. Because man tends now to confuse freedom with innumerable alternatives rather than with some choice of these alternatives, and because the shape of his neuroses is an experience of freedom which he cannot cope with, he reacts by striking at freedom, in the name of freedom. If there is anything amusing in the current controversy over academic freedom, it is that both sides, the accusers and the accused, defend themselves in the name of freedom. The accusers say they want a free society; the accused say the teacher should be free. Both are in the right. And yet, the teacher is just as apt to forget that his task involves the making of free men, not merely informed men, as the community is apt to ignore its guilty fear of other men being free at a time when it is no longer able to bear its own freedom.

The community says, "You teachers are responsible to us; you

must be loyal." The teachers cannot deny they are responsible. But do they mean the same thing? To what must the teacher be loyal? To the whims or even the considered opinion of the community? Who is to judge? Again I would urge that one try to distinguish between education and action. For the sake of the common good, of action, and of law, the community must set up judges. If it does not, anarchy follows. But experience and the seeking of truth are not similar. Anarchy is destructive in experience; it is part and parcel of the quest for truth. There is no prescribed beginning and end, no prescribed order, that a teacher can be sure of. Everything he touches on is tinged with hypothesis, with guessing. If he pretends this is not so, he immediately ceases to approach truth. Each truth has thousands of veils; it is tempting to pretend that each unveiling is the last.

It may be shocking to use the words "improvisation" and "anarchy" in connection with education; it is more shocking to pretend that the realities they denote can be avoided. Anarchy is not to be confused with chaos. Improvisation is not to be confused with absence of discipline or conviction. The greatest organist is he who can improvise on a theme which is handed to him. The greatest statesman is the one that can accept political situations *in medias res* and seek to lead society to a higher destiny than it had known. Likewise, the skilful teacher accepts anarchy and improvisation as facts inseparable from teaching and rejoices that they provide him opportunities for achieving that which has not yet been known. Neither anarchy nor improvisation is, however, ideal. The skilful teacher tries to move toward an order suggested by his experience and his insight. His very improvisation should give him the chance to exhibit a disciplined mind. But neither order nor discipline is the end either. The end is the habit of mind of the student.

Such an end is the only standard by which one can judge the success of education. There are three habits of mind which the teacher should keep his eye on: discipline, criticism, and fertility. This means that a student's progress is to be judged by his sense of order, his openness to controversy, his ability to originate ideas. Can he think straight? Can he entertain various and opposing concepts? Can he think on his own, without parroting? He may also understand Thucydides or quantum mechanics or the articles of

faith. There is much that he may and probably should know that the community may prefer him to know rather than see him develop these three habits. But all the rest fades, and such habits alone stay on, mold the man's character, and, in the end, mold society's character. Conceptual and imaginative fertility falls apart without the cement of an orderly mind. Order, unrelated to the shifting appearance of the world—to the mind that is essentially unstable—is transformed into tyranny, without the criticism that never ceases to observe and judge. A critical mind that has no ideas of its own is like an instrument trying to wield itself; a critical mind which does not depend on the order of reason is flighty and irresponsible. These are simple desirables, but no less important for all that. They are indispensable for the community as well as for the students and the teachers. A society is not free unless it is rational, critical, and fertile. These are the criteria of freedom; freedom itself is the criterion of the quest for truth and the experience of living in the truth.

Teacher and community are mutually responsible. If the latter is not expected to say, "My teachers, right or wrong," why should it expect the teacher to say, "My country, right or wrong"? To speak in these terms is to fog the issue. Both have an educational obligation to seek and to say the truth, no matter how untimely that truth may seem. Both should keep in mind an even greater and harder obligation, never to let the reiteration of a supposed truth impede the growth of the three habits of mind mentioned above. This means, in practical language, that the community should expect the school to engage in controversy, to think and say what is unpopular or even what may seem wrong-headed. Education is concerned with thought and speech, not action, and it is impossible to curb thought and speech without losing their advantages. No one need be afraid of the truth. And free men need not fear fallacies and untruths.

The principle to keep in mind is the distinction between education and action. Thoughts can harm no one; they can only scare. Society needs to be scared when it begins to fear free speech. But when educators begin to prefer the propagating of truths rather than the development of habits, the community should look for new teachers. The test of a teacher can never be political or a priori; he must be judged by the effects he has already had. The courts also do not condemn a man for his words but for the effects of the words. One

cannot judge intentions; one can only be wary of them, if one knows them. No teacher should be dismissed who has a proven reputation for developing the three habits of reasoning, criticism, and innovation. No community should assume that it can determine his reputation and his effects on the basis of his believing one doctrine rather than another. In the end, it is the way a teacher approaches and handles truth or doctrine that determines his effectiveness as an example, not his preferring one doctrine to another.

Any other attitude toward the teacher's freedom is apt to depend on a highly relativistic view of truth and society. What seems wrong or vicious to one nation is not even vicious to the same nation at another time, or even to whole segments of its population at the same time. People are inclined now to give such remarks a political context only. If there are those who do not want certain political or economic texts to be approved of, there are those who do not want religion to be examined at all except by and for those who are already its partisans. Truth, however, is common property, no matter what the area; and no greater harm can be done to individuals and to society than to prejudge certain areas or certain expressions of truth. Moreover, when certain expressions of truth have been judged false, no one has the right to exclude these expressions from human converse, lest he take on himself the claim of infallibility.

Mankind needs more truth desperately and should push aside parochial inclinations in order to find it wherever it is. If this means giving respect where respect is due, then it would be better to stop thinking in terms of such alternatives as "patriotism" or "international co-operation." Truth is universal not national. The school serves the community by discovering the truth which the community and the world need, by developing free men who will continue the search for truth when they begin to act. Therefore, the school is not merely the training ground for leaders; it provides the leadership in terms of new ideas, which it tests in its own arenas, and provides the skills of argument, inquiry, and innovation which no balanced, just, or expanding society can do without.

### *Religious and Moral Education*

Existentialism and religion are closely associated by definition and in history. Both are concerned with the finiteness of man and with man's anxieties in face of the consequences of his finiteness. Most

existentialists are also religious in the sense that they do not believe man has it in his power to solve his deepest anxieties. These religious existentialists, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, believe that the function of existentialism is descriptive, not prescriptive, and that the prescription for the worst ills is God's, not man's. But there are existentialists who prefer or who can only believe in a neostoicism, which, while not believing man is able to overcome the world, does believe that man alone must try to do so. Both kinds of existentialism know they are primarily concerned with the same experiences of life that all religions, Eastern as well as Western, have always been concerned with. They know that without death, sickness, failure, and homelessness, man would not need religion or existentialism.

They know that existentialism, as a self-conscious way of looking at experience, arose one hundred years ago in a deeply religious man, Søren Kierkegaard. They know that wherever one finds traces and anticipations of existentialism before Kierkegaard, as in Augustine or Pascal or Sophocles or the *Bible*, one is looking at a religious source. It was only when religion and experience had both lost their bite, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that it was necessary to separate the religious need from the religious answer. The religious need is not necessarily a need to which there is a religious answer. It is simply the human need of ultimate recognition. The individual who knows he must die, who suffers, who does not measure up to his own ideal, who cannot find the home and the over-all meaning that his being requires, wants above everything, some evidence that at least his need is recognized by others as the most important thing about him. He wants the universe itself to give some evidence, if possible, that it, too, recognizes this need as legitimate and appeasable. But there is no logical necessity which says that if there is a need for the universe to recognize and appease, the universe will oblige. It is just as logical to say that man is born with limitations that apparently are not overcome, unless secretly. On the other hand, there are those who still believe that man can compensate for, if not overcome, his limitations. Man may not live forever, but he can compensate for death in some way by his life. This is, of course, harder to say of someone else's life which you miss and which you may say cannot be replaced. As long as a man holds that another man is irreplaceable, no bright-faced agnosticism is acceptable.

Whatever the answer of the religious man or the agnostic or

atheist, an existentialist view of man calls attention to a nature that is in many ways limited and that cannot make itself unlimited. At bottom, the existentialist point of view starts side by side with the religious point of view. To this extent they speak the same language, use the same categories, because they are moved by the same basic experiences. They part company only when the religious answer seems to be unacceptable to the individual philosopher. It is in this sense, by the way, that religion has a philosophical basis, rests on experiences everyone goes through. If this were clearly understood, the props would be suddenly removed from much of the bad-tempered objection to religion and to the place of religion in education. The religious answer may seem to be a deceit and delusion, but its intention to answer something that must be dealt with because it is experienced is so much more honest and clearheaded than the attitude toward life of most of those who waste time gibing against those who try to deal with something unquestionably serious.

Every man now living is going to die. What does this mean to him? Can a man suppose he is educated if he has not had to face this most depressing of questions? This is not merely a "religious" question. It is human and unavoidable. Every man becomes sick sooner or later, in mind as well as body. Every man fails himself and others many times. What do sickness and guilt mean to him? What kind of being gets sick and dies? How would it differ from the kind of being that did not? Such a question cannot be asked too often to prod those who seem to be living on the tacit assumption that they are not finite. Every man is encouraged to set his sights on certain ideals, some men on more ideals, and some on higher ones. Unless a man is almost subhuman, he realizes often that he is not adequate to his own ideals or to the ideals others expect him to uphold and live by. He then experiences failure and guilt. It is not just a question of trying to do the impossible. No one ever knows just what is possible until he tries, and sometimes not even afterwards.

Every man needs a home, a place where he is known and accepted, and, if possible, liked for what he is. He needs also a spiritual home—some try to substitute a cause, a party, a nation, a club, a business—where everything he does has meaning. It is not natural to be isolated in life, although it is natural to be born and to die by one's



self. In between birth and death a man needs both world and truth, in the shape of a home and a faith. Without these, or facsimiles of them, he becomes desperately ingrown and, on any account, less human. No man can afford not to know these facts about himself, their symptoms, their causes and consequences, and some of the attempts that have been made to solve man's troubles. No school has a right to be proud of its educational aims if it does not take into account this most important area of human experience and inquiry.

The reason this area cannot be left to the churches is not because the churches do not deal with it adequately—which is true—or because most men are not touched by the churches; the reason is that this area does not belong to the churches; it belongs to all men. Existentialism serves both mankind and organized religion by extracting the very experiential base on which religion is founded and by calling it existential rather than religious. The core of religion and the core of education are thus the same, those experiences which exhibit human finiteness and the need for redemption and resurrection.

Too often the proponents of religion try to placate their enemies by employing an indirect and soft answer. They say, "You cannot understand history or literature unless you know something about religion." This is true, but it is arguing backwards. The truth is that you cannot understand man unless you understand or at least try to understand the basic experiences of a man's life, the experiences that limit him and keep him from becoming an angel or a god. Man's powers and opportunities for affirmation, creation, and self-development, as well as for communal living, cannot be understood properly apart from the limitations of man's nature. Existentialism is a corrective to "angelism." And yet existentialism is also a supporter of heroism. For the hero is the one who recognizes the ideal and strives to embody it most successfully. He will be judged a failure or a mock-hero, an anti-hero or a genuine hero, according to his ability to estimate the distance between him and his age and the ideal. Every man who wants to be a hero does not become one, not because he does not have the will, but too often because he does not have the intelligence. Education is concerned basically with the intelligence of man, with its awakening and informing. No man

is fully awake until he knows his human limitations, his *potentialities* for heroism, and, finally, his need to live with others as in a *family*. One of the things that the hero must try to avoid is to become cut off in his very heroism from the rest of mankind. He needs family more, not less, than anyone else.

To place a study of the existential or religious need in the curriculum of every school, public and private, is one thing; to introduce a study of the religious, the Christian answers, is another. But both are necessary. The school cannot and should not try to decide whether the religious need has an answer and, if it does, which one it must be. The school is only obliged, if it would inform its students, to remind them that men have made and lived out a variety of answers. All of these answers have had consequences for individuals and for their societies. Cultures cannot be understood apart from these answers as they were put into practice. Their effects have been observedly good or observedly bad, according to this or that criterion. They have seemed plausible for such and such reasons, relating to one's understanding of the existential need, man's nature.

No man can be regarded as informed, awakened, and free unless he has learned as much as he can about himself and about the examples of others like him in history. No man can call himself educated unless he knows what his religious potentialities are, no matter how unreal, foolish, or otherwise objectionable he judges them. Nothing human is alien to education, and that which is most human is that which concerns man's most serious experiences and estimate of his destiny. And so it is right and necessary that religious answers as well as religious needs be examined as critically as any other subject matters in education, at every level. Man's existential need is too pressing for him to be able to afford to remain ignorant of the principal attempts mankind has made to find an answer that satisfies.

Religion differs from other subject matters, not as doctrine differs from ethics, for other subjects lead to practice, too, but because it involves a practical exercise and relation to another order of reality, called worship. From this, most of the controversy arises. Does worship have any place at all in education, especially in a nonreligious school? In a school that thinks of itself as religious, whether Christian or not, the problem may not arise acutely. In a religious

school the only question is whether to require students without religious affiliations to attend a common worship. It seems to me that even this question can be answered in terms of a principle which affects the place of worship in the nonreligious school. Since worship is an integral part of religion, what I have been calling the religious answer includes worship. The faith of the religious man is expressed in his devotions as well as in his behavior with others or in his intellectual acceptance of doctrine. The three are, in fact, inseparable. For the human being in need of information as to the practice and meaning of the religious answer, it is just as important to understand the ways and significance of worship, as to understand the grounds and plausibility of doctrine. The school, public as well as private, should make it possible for all students to be acquainted with and to understand, so far as this is possible, the varieties of religious practice. It is just as important—more, I should say—as for it to require students to know the forms of government.

This does not, however, mean that the school should require its students to worship, using, wherever possible, the resources of the community but always holding in its power its usual prerogative of insisting that the line be strictly observed between teaching and propagandizing. There is a line, however, which does not prevent a teacher from passionately believing what he teaches and even letting his students know his passion. But this line encourages him to remember in time that a free mind is the basis of a committed mind. This is too paradoxical for some who believe that freedom means detachment or who believe that commitment is more important than freedom—a false antithesis. The existential position maintains, however, that freedom and passionate commitment are not incompatible, that one without the other is actually enslavement. In this way, I would not see any essential difference in the approach of the religious missionary from that of the nonreligious educator. If a man ceases to be free when he believes something, his belief is worthless and potentially more unstable than if he believed in fear and trembling.

### *The School and the Individual*

The relationship between teacher and students is governed by a complex group of recognitions. When no recognition is present,

there is nothing to fall back on but chaos or arbitrary authority. Much of the questioning about discipline, control, or authority, arises from situations where neither teacher nor students experience the basic recognitions that are possible in the educational experience.

Likewise, the question as to whether the students should be encouraged to use their initiative or whether the school should prescribe their ways comes from a lack of experience of the recognitions that students as well as teachers need in order to learn.

Both teacher and students are individuals, but it is not enough to say that each must recognize the other. It is more complicated than that. The teacher should recognize the student not only as an individual but also as a human being and as a future member of society. It is similarly appropriate that the students see the teacher, not just as an individual, but as a human being and a representative of the society they are entering. All teachers know the humor of hearing that they are, at last, regarded as human beings by their students. Both teachers and students have this triple aspect, with these consequences: To see another man as an individual is to treat him as if he personally mattered, as if he was irreplaceable, as if he was different from all others. This requires a sensitivity to differences, a humor, and even a certain tenderness that one does not extend to a person in so far as one is thinking of him as one of a type. To look on the same person as a human being is to realize that what he is, I am, too, as are also the other members of the class and the world. It is to touch on and have him touch on the universal characteristics which history, literature, philosophy, and religion are primarily concerned with, his capacity for creative work, persistence, heroism, also his existential need for redemption and justification. To look on the individual as a member of society is to remember that no one lives at all, and never well, unless he lives co-operatively. And so both teacher and students co-operate in the classroom, encouraging each other to appreciate this triple aspect of human beings. But the encouragement would be sentimental, false, irrelevant, if it were too direct and took place away from the context of learning something.

Co-operation and recognition move properly in the context of a subject matter, whether it be algebra or social science. Both teacher and students must learn to recognize something between and at first

—if not always—beyond them, the truth of the subject matter. To learn is to lose one's ego, and keeping and reinforcing one's ego is the danger of interpersonal relationships that have nothing in between them. Curiosity and concern by themselves are empty and even sickly. Even two people talking together need something else to talk about than themselves, for, even to talk about one's self adequately, one needs a universal reference to lift the isolated and differentiated ego out of its prison. For this reason the experienced teacher will often hide his personal feelings about students, or will deliberately deceive them if he fears that they are becoming distracted from the subject matter.

To recognize the student is not only to know how different he is from others, it is also to sympathize with his condition and his efforts. And yet it may be fatal to show any or much of one's sympathy. There is nothing more delicate than the balance that a teacher—or a good student—has to keep between his recognition of the student—as a person, as human being, and as a member of society—and their mutual and yet always differing recognition of the subject matter they are co-operating on. One has to judge quickly and surely which side of this student he can appeal to, in order to open up the potentialities of a certain subject matter. To appeal to him as a member of society may mean nothing to him at a particular moment in his life or with a particular subject matter; to appeal to him as a human being may lift him out of an adolescent introversion. On the other hand, he may feel pressed by the multiplicity of requirements and ideas he is meeting and may need the reference to himself that pretends that he alone is sitting in the classroom.

A teacher should be prepared to perpetrate almost any act or point of view in order to help students recognize the potentialities of the subject matter—not for the sake of the subject matter, but for the ultimate benefit of the students and the community they will return to. The teacher's authority resides in his feeling and knowing the purpose and the workings of these recognitions. If the students catch on to the experience, their own initiative will be awakened, and from then on teacher and students will compete with each other to recognize first the truths that are between and beyond them. This will mean the continuation, the fruition, not just the beginning of a discipline both sides will employ. For there is a preparatory disci-

pline of inquiry that the teacher uses by himself, before he has awakened and trained his pupils to act on their own and with him. To some extent he must be an example. His flexibility must have a clear sense of method and purpose and not appear as chaotic and confusing. And yet he must be so flexible that the students will not suppose they should imitate his method or his pronouncements. Shaw once said that, when a man learns something, he feels as if he has lost something. Learning is not initially encouraging. But this is because one is losing one's ego. The risk is that one delivers one's ego to the teacher, or the teacher to the student. The only way to avoid the morass of enslavement to persons, or sentimentality, is to study that which is in between persons.

The appropriateness of the word "recognition" may best be understood in its relevance to the act of learning. We are indebted to Plato and to Augustine for our understanding of the significance of this aspect of experience. When a man knows something for the first time, it is as if he had known it before. That is why men say that they recognize something to be true. The new learning fits into the family of truths already held. This is what encouraged Plato to believe that learning is remembering. Augustine too believed this, but, although he did not think this implied a previous existence of the soul, he thought it implied the existence in us of God who is Truth. For Augustine, learning is not only remembering but returning to the heart of man which is the Infinite and Creator in man. "Behold thou wert within me, and I abroad." When something is understood, it is recognized, reknown as it were, accepted as both new and yet as familiar, as ever new. This would go to account for the double aspect of learning, the surprise of discovery and the satisfaction at the familiarity of that which seemed new but is perfectly acceptable.

It is this sort of recognition that unifies life, that holds maturity and adolescence together. The perpetually adolescent mind retreats from familiarity and admires a freedom which is associated with novelty only. But there is no staying-power or depth of satisfaction to novelty alone. The mind tires of being a perpetual tourist. The truer image of the human journey is not that of the explorer or tourist but that of the voyager who is both adventurous and home-seeking. This is the greatness of the symbol and myth of Odysseus, as important for the journey of life as the figure of Jesus Christ is

for the redemption and resurrection of that life. Along this journey, education is the typical experience. One might even call life's journey educational; for life consists of a series of recognitions, which at best are related to each other, in which man meets something different and finds out that he knows his way around with it. If he can think of the journey as a homecoming and not as an adventure to the indefinite, then he can look on separate acts of learning and experience as tastes of the final return to a world and a truth where he will be fully at home. To educate a man is to lead him home, to help him to return to that which is within him but not of him. To educate is to lead a man through the adventures and the wastes of shock, confusion, struggle, failure, discovery, assimilation, until he gets to expect the sign of truth, familiarity, behind every façade he claws at.

Man is capable of many things, creative, co-operative, contemplative. But he is tragically limited, with the possibility of the rug being pulled from under him at any moment, by himself or by fate. His life is, therefore, essentially poignant, a mixture of effort and imminent collapse. His basic understanding of himself is a nostalgic one, a recognition of himself as needing a home and as capable of much that he apparently cannot be. Only by forgetting, denying, abstracting, by risking splits in his consciousness, can man evade this nostalgia and recognition. If he tries to find his existence honestly, clear-sightedly, soberly, he can have both ecstasy and quiet, both panic and pain, both ecstasy and panic, both quiet and pain. But it is dangerous to pretend or to forget that ecstasy can wipe out panic, or quiet wipe out suffering. Man is multifarious, but also polar. His life is based on the electrical current generated by such opposites. The educated man is one who has recognized this minimum of the truth of human nature and history—but in his own way and terms—and is emboldened not to oversimplify man's condition. Whether he is a happy or a good man is another question altogether, a question requiring decision rather than recognition. Education is immediately concerned with recognition, not decision or action. Education can point to the way or ways to both happiness and good character; it cannot and ought not to prescribe or enforce. Education is the journey, not the end of the journey; the recognition, not the decision to accept the recognition and stay at home.

*Comments on Ralph Harper's Essay*

ROBERT ULICH

We have to be grateful to Mr. Harper that in addition to his most valuable book, *Existentialism: A Theory of Man*, he has now given us a profound essay on the relationship between existentialism and education. May I add some brief comments in order to underline the significance of this relationship in regard to the specific American situation.

1. Many of our courses in philosophy of education, just as many courses in our philosophy departments, offer the neophyte a classification of the most important "schools of thought." This may be justified as an introduction, an overview, or a "first guide" through the gigantic museum of philosophical ideas. But it has two disadvantages. Unless there is time for deeper concentration—and there rarely is—it leaves the student in the same bewilderment as the Louvre leaves the man who has dashed through all its halls in one morning. Where is, for the young educator, the rational bond, "das geistige Band" between the variety of opinions as well as between theory and practice for which the students in our universities are longing just as much, and often just as in vain, as the young Goethe almost two centuries ago at the University of Strasbourg?

Fortunately, more than is the case with the primarily speculative philosopher who finds himself confronted with an infinity of problems, the philosopher of education possesses a unifying idea, that is *man himself*, man as the being that needs a long education and struggles to master himself through living reflectively within the universe of which he is a part.

Here, it seems to me, lies the affinity between the educator and the existentialist. Both enjoy, or suffer from, a multitude of questions and possible answers—consider the whole gamut from Christ-centeredness to humanism and agnosticism. But whatever the differences, they agree that man is the starting point and center of concern. Since Kierkegaard, the "founder" of existentialism, passionately protested, in the sacred name of the individual, against the rational-historical schematism of Hegel (and every existentialist is under the influence of these two protagonists), the interest in man, as he "exists," has remained as the link between existentialist thinkers



who otherwise would be miles apart from each other. Man, as he "exists," that means in a slightly arbitrary use of the term "existing," as he is in the totality of his personality, not only rationally but also emotionally, is related to the great events and mysteries of life: birth, death, love, tradition, society and the crowd, success and failure, salvation and anxiety.

Which educator, who is not only an "instructor" but a "teacher," can avoid thinking about the same great questions?

2. In view of the comprehensiveness of the interest that unites the educator and the existentialist, two currents of thought that have influenced American education during the past decades, namely, pragmatism and experimental psychology, seem to many of us today too restricted in scope. Great though their contributions are, they fail to comprehend the wholeness of man. Despite their common aversion against idealism, they present an "ideal" man, i.e., a man fashioned according to their hypothetical pattern, rather than a "real" man. The pragmatic concepts of trial, growth, the experimental method, and the test of the final outcome were conceived at a time when humanity was supposed to climb the last cliff of the mountain of progress. Mankind has behaved disappointingly, and we ourselves feel no longer secure about growth and perfection as the inevitable result of the experimental attitude. Life cannot be understood unilaterally; it is dialectically structured. Democracy itself has much deeper roots than science and experiment, though it cannot exist without them.

As Mr. Harper indicates, the person who speaks only of freedom, and not at the same time of commitment, of moving and not at the same time of the goal, may not understand the meaning and function of either. In contrast, existentialist philosophy takes the complexity of life seriously. As a matter of fact, it starts from the admission that man is the seeking, erring, and bewildered creature.

Nor can experimental psychology be the teacher's exclusive guide for human understanding. Only parts of the totality and depth of the person are accessible to the scientific method as it is generally understood in departments of psychology and education. "Learning," the chief object of interest for the educational psychologist, is certainly to a degree "tension reduction" or something similar. But these terms do not represent the depth of the process of directed self-transcend-

ence which is behind and within human learning, in contrast to the animal's learning. Man is not only a cross section of "behavior patterns"; he reaches into an ontological sphere, however veiled this sphere may be to our intellect. In comparison with the works of the great existentialist thinkers, poets, and novelists, take, e.g., Dostoyevski, a textbook on experimental psychology can only scratch the surface. That says nothing against the attempt to catch as many forms of human reaction and experience into the network of experimental proof as possible. It only says something against false claims of completeness.

3. Nor could existentialism itself ever be complete. One of its merits is that it helps us to understand the relativity of words and "isms" in comparison to the great enterprise of living. The term itself is one of the labels that may be necessary for quick communication but which carry with them just as much misunderstanding as mutual comprehension. None of the existentialist philosophers works in isolation from the great tradition. Existentialism could not even stand on itself alone. Mr. Harper's essay, like the works of Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, Rousselot and Tillich, rests on Christianity; Jaspers' and Heidegger's philosophies are monuments of self-criticism of a long metaphysical, humanist, and critical tradition from the pre-Socratic philosophers to Nietzsche and Bergson. In Sartre a courageous humanism tries to come to grips with the nihilist realization of the nothing—*L'être et le néant*. In the writings of Kierkegaard one can find sentences which sound like quotations from Hegel.

4. But in this openness to all of life's events lies also the shortcoming of existentialism. Criticism of systems is necessary, but so are systems themselves. They are not only frozen ideas. Rather they are heroic attempts at integration of human experience at a particular space and time, subject to the finiteness of human reason, but nevertheless its consummations. Hegelian dogmatism, as any other fixation of thought, has done much harm., However, there was in this country the Hegelian, William T. Harris, and, acknowledging his deep indebtedness to Hegel despite all deviation, John Dewey. This is perhaps one of the functions of systems. They are stumbling blocks; they create lines of defense and lines of attack.

In this respect existentialism, despite its aversion to systems, makes

no exception. All over the world it has aroused discussion and re-thinking. But in certain circles, it is also *le dernier cri*. To the horror of its leading thinkers, there already exists a sort of existentialist journalism, a floating in existentialist feelings, a flirting with despair and, consequently, also with religion, a cynicism about the idea of human progress, a blind hatred against technology, and a profoundly reactionary antirationalism.<sup>1</sup>

These attitudes of insincerity are dangerous anywhere, but they are so especially in education that demands not only empathy in and a fine sense for the depth of human situations but also direction and decision. Mr. Harper and I are agreed that nothing could be worse for education than a wave of pseudoexistentialism. But take the new philosophical movement seriously, let it operate in fruitful competition and mutual criticism with the scientist's hard empiricism, the educator's devoted efforts for human improvement, the religious man's belief in the final meaning of human life, and the statesman's work for a better society. Then, through its positive ideas as well as through its aversion to superficial optimisms and rationalizations, existentialism will be a new motive power of civilization.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### *Linguistic Approach to Problems of Education\**

KENNETH BURKE

#### *Basic Orientation*

Beginning absolutely, we might define man as the typically language-using, or symbol-using, animal. And on the basis of such a definition, we could argue for a "linguistic approach to the problems of education." Or we could settle for much less, merely pointing to the obviously great importance of the linguistic factor as regards both education in particular and human relations in general.

#### LANGUAGE IN EDUCATIONAL THEORY

For symmetry's sake, we would build upon the more thoroughgoing of these positions. Yet, for prudence' sake, we would remind the reader: Even if he will not go so far with us, there are still many points in favor of restoring (however differently) the great stress once placed upon language in educational theory. (Recall that the medieval *trivium* comprised grammar, rhetoric, and logic or dialectic.)

In either case, whether the more thoroughgoing or the less thoroughgoing of these positions is adopted, we shall be considering our subject in terms of symbolic action. We shall look upon language-using as a mode of conduct and shall frame our terms accordingly. We could call this position "dramatistic" because it thus begins with a stress upon "action." And it might be contrasted with idealistic terminologies, that begin with considerations of perception, knowledge, learning. In contrast with such *epistemological* approaches, this approach would be *ontological*, centering upon the *substantiality* of the *act*. Also, a "dramatistic" approach, as so con-

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ceived, is *literal*, not *figurative*. Man *literally* is a symbol-using animal. He *really does* approach the world symbol-wise (and symbol-foolish).<sup>1</sup>

But a "dramatistic" approach, with its definition of man as the typically language-using or symbol-using animal, points two ways. First, the principles of symbol-using must be considered in their own right, as a separate "realm" or "dimension" (not reducible to "nature" in the nonverbal or extraverbal sense of the term). Second, the formula should warn us not to overlook the term "animal" in our definition. Man *as an animal* is subject to the realm of the extraverbal, or nonsymbolic, a realm of material necessity that is best charted in terms of *motion*. That is, in his sheer animality, man is to be described in terms of *physical* or *physiological motion*, as contrasted with the kind of terms we need for analyzing the realm of verbal action.

Professor Brubacher has touched upon an analogous problem, when referring to the classical definition of man as "rational animal." As regards those who "subscribed to a humanistic theory of education," he says: "They held with Aristotle that the distinctive nature of man which set him off from other animals was his rationality. The principal function of education, therefore, was to develop this rationality."

In general, this partial *nonsequitur*, in leading some thinkers to overstress the differentia (man's "rationality"), led others to an antithetical overstress upon the genus (man's "animality"). And if we are to abide by our somewhat similar definition, we must watch lest, in our zeal to bring out the *formal* considerations of the differential (language-using, or symbol-using), we slight the *material* considerations of the genus (animal). Or, otherwise put: We must

1. Our views represent "semanticism" mainly in the sense that the emphasis is *linguistic*. But this essay does not propose to be a survey of the field. And, in one most notable respect, it runs directly counter to typical "semanticist" procedures. The late Korzybski's teachings, for instance, centered about an attack upon what he called "elementalism." Another word for it would be "substance-thinking." While sharing his distrust of such thinking (political "racist" theories are drastic enough grounds for such distrust), we take it that the principle of substance (and consubstantiality) cannot be eliminated from language; accordingly, we would seek rather for terms designed to make its presence as obvious as possible. Kant treated "substance" as a universal form of the *mind*; correspondingly, we would at least treat "substance-thinking" as a universal motive of *language*.

guard lest, in our zeal for a terminology of *action*, we overlook the areas properly chartable in terms of *motion*.

Accordingly, a "dramatistic" terminology built about this definition for man will not exalt terms for "action" to the exclusion of terms for "motion." If, by the physical realm, we mean the nonverbal ("subverbal" or "extraverbal") realm, then the *physical realm* is properly treated in terms of motion. And "action" (ethics, "personality," and the like) will be confined to the realm of symbol-using, with its appropriate principles. Thus, a "dramatistic" perspective, as so conceived, would *decidedly not* oblige us to treat of "things" in the terminology proper to "persons" or vice versa.

The problem is complicated by the fact that, while there can be motion without action (as with a falling material object, or the operations of some purely mechanical device), there can be no action without motion (as one cannot think or speak or carry out a decision without a corresponding set of sheerly neural and muscular goings-on). Thus, there is a sense in which every human act is merged with its sheerly physical or physiological ground. For instance, whereas the *actions* of a game are motivated by the logic of the rules, such acts also involve the sheer physical *motions* of the players and their instruments, in varying quantitative distribution about the field. (*Nulla actio sine motione*. A team can't win a game unless it knows how to "throw its weight around.")

Or consider cases where moral attitudes affect physiological functioning (as when emotional disturbances produce disorders of the bodily organs). Here the realm of action (and its "passions"! ) is seen to infuse the realm of motion in ways grotesquely analogous to the powers of a "grace" that, according to the theologians, "perfects" nature.

Thus, though the realms of "action" and "motion" are *discontinuous* in so far as the "laws" of action are not in strict principle reducible to the "laws" of motion (quite as the rules of grammar could not properly be reduced to terms suitable for electronics), the two realms must be *interwoven* in so far as man's *generic animality* is experienced by him in terms of his *specific* "symbolicity."

Suppose, for instance, that we tried to conceive of "property" in as purely "physical" a sense as possible. We might note respects in which an organism "accumulates private property" by adapting to

its particular needs certain portions of its environment. *Its* food, *its* air, *its* water, *its* sunlight, *its* space, *its* shelter, *its* mate—some or all of these things may be “appropriated,” in accordance with the specific nature of the organism. In this sense, assimilation could be said to involve a purely *physiological* kind of “private property,” however mutual may be the relationships prevailing among various organisms, or “substances,” in their “ecological balance.”

Here is the realm of “animality,” of sheer physical “necessity.” If the organism is denied the proper “motions” of assimilation or digestion needed for its survival, it dies. It *must* take into itself alien substances, in accordance with the nature of *its* substance. Some degree of such purely *material* appropriation, with the many material “motions” involved in these processes, is necessary to sheer animal survival. And man, as an animal, confronts the same necessities.

Think next of the many ways whereby such rudimentary needs are transcended, once we move into the realm of “symbolic action.” Here we come upon the vast structure of “rights” and “obligations” that takes form when “property” is conceived *legalistically* (as with the “legal fictions” of a modern financial corporation, which the courts treat as a “person”). Surely no one would hold that the “needs” of such a “body” are reducible purely to terms of a few biological necessities. Ownership, as so conceived, involves a fantastically intricate network of purely *symbolic* operations, as evidenced by the army of *clerics* who in one way or another are occupied with promulgating, recording, interpreting, and enforcing the sheerly *man-made* laws of property.

To consider this realm intelligibly, we must discuss symbolic manipulations as such. For obviously, they have a “perfection” of their own, a formal resourcefulness that transcends the nonsymbolic or extrasymbolic realm of purely biological functioning. And such a realm of “personality” goes so far beyond the needs of sheer “animality,” that whereas a physical organism can “biologically own” only so much as it can take into its body, or as it can by purely physical powers deny to another, a member of the symbol-using species may “symbolically own” resources that, in his capacity as a sheer physical organism, he could not exhaust in a million lifetimes.

Indeed, once ownership becomes modified by the conditions of purely symbolic action, a realm of fantasy and paradox arises. Does



a great leader, for instance, "own" his office as head of a state? Or is he not rather "owned" by his subjects who consider themselves "consubstantial" with him, so far as their sense of participation in a common cause is concerned? Whatever your answer to this quandary may be, you will grant that such thoughts confront us with a great *drama* of *human* relations. For quite as a state is held together physically by a network of purely *material* communicative resources (things that exist and operate in accordance with the laws of *motion*), so this network itself is guided in its construction and control by a network of purely *symbolic* acts and symbol-guided purposes, ranging from the lowly processes of bookkeeping and accountancy to the over-all terminology of "right," "justice," "beauty," "propriety," "truth," the "good life," etc., in which the logic of a given social order comes to an ideal, theoretic head.

Above sheer human animality, then (above man's genus as rooted in the laws of material motion), there has been erected a social complexity that could not have existed without the aid of man's differentia (his capacity for symbolic action). And in this sense, though we would warn against the temptation to forget the genus in our concern with the differentia, we would hold that the proper approach to the genus is *through* the study of symbolic action, as such action takes form in the drama of human relations. Otherwise, for reasons that we shall consider as we proceed, the failure to detect the full scope of the "linguistic dimension" in human affairs and human attitudes obscures our understanding of both the linguistic and the extralinguistic. According to the position here advocated, there is a "pageantry" in objects, a "socioanagogic" element imposed upon them, so far as man is concerned, because man necessarily approaches them in accordance with the genius of his nature as a symbol-human species. Since language is social in the political, administrative sense, the purely physical sociality of nonlinguistic things thus subtly partakes of this purely symbolic spirit, so far as human dealings with "nature" are concerned.

Here is the problem at the bottom of our search, as at the bottom of a well. Our motto might be: By and through language, beyond language. *Per linguam, praeter linguam.*

The "dramatistic" is to be distinguished from the "dramatic," in that drama proper is the symbolizing or imitating of action, whereas

the "dramatistic" is a critical or essayistic analysis of language, and thence of human relations generally, by the use of terms derived from the contemplation of drama.

But the dramatistic can take great dramas as its point of departure. They provide the set forms in conformity with which we would construct our terminology. Since the real world of action is so confused and complicated as to seem almost formless, and too extended and unstable for orderly observation, we need a more limited material that might be representative of human ways while yet having fixity enough to allow for systematic examination.

In this respect, great dramas would be our equivalents of the laboratory experimenter's "test cases." But this kind of "controlled conditions" would differ from the arbitrary controls of a typical laboratory experiment. The losses are obvious, the gains less so, unless one stops to realize how hard it is to set up laboratory conditions for establishing instances of symbolic action that, while having a form sufficiently stable to be methodically observable, are also sufficiently complex and mature to be representative of human motives.<sup>2</sup>

But we may be on less cogent ground when laying primary emphasis upon the examining of written texts. Professor Benne has tellingly raised this objection in correspondence, pointing to the many elements besides the literary text that figure in a dramatic performance, and suggesting that the present writer's occupational psychosis as a specialist in literature may be partly responsible for this textual emphasis. To be sure, though we can at least point to the example of Aristotle, who rated the text of a drama higher than its performance, we must never forget that many fresh exegetical insights come of witnessing actual performances (as when we compare different actors' readings of the same lines); and a sympathetic auditor may be mysteriously moved by a performance given in a language he doesn't even know). Yet, although histrionic and

2. From the "dramatistic" point of view, for instance, experiments with animals would be categorically suspect, since animals are not typically linguistic; and experiments with children would be categorically suspect, since children are not sufficiently mature. Such material might serve suggestively, but it could not possibly have all the "dimensions" needed for the analysis of any complete linguistic performance. And we work on the assumption that our test cases should intrinsically possess such a range.

choreographic elements (tonal, plastic, and scenic) contribute critically to the enjoyment and understanding of drama, don't all such modes of expression regularly build their logic *about the interpretation of the text itself*?

Professor Benne has further objected that we tend to neglect the fertile field of drama-like situations in real life (situations that may arise spontaneously, or may be set up partly by the deliberate cunning of an impresario; as with some "candid" radio and television programs). This is a particularly important objection, since education is so largely in the realm of public relations generally. Our point here is simply that one should not *begin* a "dramatistic" analysis with such cases. But co-ordinates *developed from the analysis of formal drama* should certainly be applied to fluctuant material of this sort. Further, such applications, made by a different class of specialists, should reveal notable respects in which the drama-like situations of real life *differ* from drama proper (a difference probably centering in the fact that situations in real life lack *finality*, except in so far as life happens to "imitate art"). Professor Benne's desire to place more weight upon drama-like situations in life ("a playground fight, for example") led us to realize that, given the new recording devices for motion and sound, such new-style documents do resemble the text of a formal drama, in allowing for repeated analysis of a single unchanging development (an "action" that, in its totality, remains always the same). Here, in effect, the new means of recording, or "writing," have extended the realm of the "text" into areas that once lay beyond it. Such material comes close to the "textual" ideal we have in mind; since an observer can repeatedly observe the identical object, thus having the best opportunity to mature his observations.

Still (in an "occupationally psychotic" way) we feel that the written word comes nearest (so far as "records" go) to a merging of "linguistic anatomy" with "linguistic physiology." For single words (many of which are recurrent in the given text) are in their singularity quite "dead"; yet they are very much "alive," as regards their ways of taking part contextually with one another. And in the beginning of our culture was the assurance that in the beginning was the word.

On the other hand, we do not by any means equate "symbol-

using" with "word-using." All the arts, such as music, painting, sculpture, the dance, even architecture, are in various ways and to varying degrees symbolic activities. Verbal symbol-using (like its variant, mathematics) enjoys a special place among the lot because the individual word has a kind of conceptual clarity not found in individual notes, colors, lines, motions, and the like (except in so far as these are in effect *words*, as with the conventionalized doctrinal representations in some traditional ritual dance).

In this connection, Professor Benne has suggested that the justification for featuring language among symbolic media may "lie in the fitness of word-symbols for the *criticism* and *analysis* of the others, including word-symbols themselves." This observation suggested to us another step in the same direction, thus: Inasmuch as education merges into the philosophy of education, we may note that verbal symbols are the best medium for "philosophizing" about anything.

Professor Benne adds:

Mr. Burke seems not quite to have met my point about the selection of cases to be used educationally for dramatistic analysis. True enough, "great dramas would be our equivalents of the laboratory experimenter's 'test cases.'" And teachers, under the influence of dramatistic philosophizing, would in their education have analyzed these "test cases" and would have acquired an appreciation of the folly and grandeur of man's differentialia, symbol using, as well as skills in analyzing the complexities of language within the far-flung drama of human relations. But would children under the tutelage of such teachers delay their educational experience with dramatistic analysis of human action until they had gained the maturity to deal with these "test cases"? I would hope not. I do not pretend to know at what age students might profitably analyze the great dramas dramatistically. Let's guess arbitrarily they might begin at fifteen or sixteen. Long before that time, of course, they are acquiring orientations and habits toward using and being used by language, toward enacting the follies and grandeurs of human (symbolic) action. Shouldn't their education incorporate elements of dramatistic analysis before they are ready for the "complete texts"? I think it should. And some of the materials for such analysis might well come from the dramas of human relations in everyday life in which they take part, using whatever devices of mechanical recording, spontaneous dramatization, participant observation, etc., which might advance the learning. Perhaps students so brought up would be more ready to profit from analysis of the "test cases" par excellence when they were mature enough to deal with them directly than students who had had no previous orientation to dramatism and its methods.

## LANGUAGE AND PROBLEMS OF HUMAN RELATIONS

But for our over-all principles, we necessarily select terms so highly generalized that they apply to work greatly varying in quality (just as both an "excellent" play and a merely "representative" one might be said to have beginning, middle, and end, or to be written in blank verse, or to be a tragedy).

All told, the project approaches the problem of human relations through a study of language in its four major aspects: (a) the logical or indicative; (b) the rhetorical or persuasive; (c) the poetic; (d) the ethical or personal. But only some of the theories and rules of thumb on which this essay is based are directly relevant to the philosophy of education. And in trying to decide which parts of this material should be stressed here, we shall follow the very helpful lead of an article by Professor Benne, "Toward a Grammar of Educational Motives," published in the January, 1947, issue of *Educational Forum*. The article is built around a review of the present writer's book, *A Grammar of Motives*, which outlines the "dramatic" view of language and of motivational problems generally. The article makes the following main points:

The *Grammar* "may be read as a reaction against 'scientistic' attempts to 'reduce' the explanation of human conduct to the influence of various conditions and causes—physical, chemical, biological or generally environmental." Burke "finds an irreducible minimum of terms necessary to the adequate discussion of human motivation," and he derives these "from his analysis of dramatic action." There are five such terms, which "'point' in any human action to an actor, a scene, some agency (means), a purpose, as well as the over-all action in which the other terms are united."

Again, "Whatever the various motivations of the semanticists, one may see Burke as a semanticist, seeking to give an interpretation of meaning and its transformations in a 'dramatic' as opposed to the 'scientistic' perspective which has prevailed in most semantic studies."

"Still another approach" might stress the fact that "in focusing on the language of *any* discussion of motives," the book "is a 'grammatical' approach to discourse about motives." Hence, "on this view, various philosophies become 'casuistries' seeking only to apply these grammatical principles in and to 'the case' of some actual and given

cultural situation." Accordingly, Burke attempts a "casuistry" of his own, taking major philosophic systems as 'cases' and developing their distinctive characters in terms of their varying stress upon one or another of the terms of his pentad," as materialism features the "scenic" element in motivation, idealism stresses "agent," pragmatism "agency" (instrument), mysticism "purpose," and realism "act." (We might here add that the book also stresses the ways whereby the terms become functions of one another: Thus, by the "scene-act ratio" is meant a statement where the substance of an act is said to have been potentially or analogously present in the scene, and to be derived from the scene; similarly, an "agent-act" ratio derives the quality of the act from the corresponding nature of the agent; the "purpose-agency ratio" concerns the relation of consistency or substantiality between end and means; etc.)

The project as a whole (including portions still to be published) aims at an "extended comic treatment of human relations, of the 'foibles and antics' of 'the Human Barnyard.'" Reaffirming "the parliamentary process," it is motivated by a "humanitarian concern to see how far conflict (war) may be translated practically into linguistic struggle and how such verbal struggle may be made to eventuate in a common enactment short of physical combat."

Other details noted: "encouraging tolerance by speculation"; a "Neo-Liberal Ideal" that proposes to accept with ironic resignation "the development of technology, a development that will require such a vast bureaucracy (in both political and commercial administration) as the world has never before encountered"; would "confront the global situation with an attitude neither local nor imperialistic"; and is designed to embody its attitude in a method of linguistic analysis.

In his "however's" (and however's are of the essence in this perspective) Professor Benne finds that Burke's book is not sufficiently "normative, preferential." But there is a partial however to this however: "Nevertheless, one can find implicit norms in his description of his method," as with Burke's stress upon the *dialectical*, which is equated with "dramatism" at one end and with "scientific method" at the other, and with an over-all complexity of view that is ironic. (For irony "arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a development which uses all

the terms," in the methodic search for "a 'perspective of perspectives' in which the values of each partial perspective are in some measure preserved.")

Calling the book "a methodology of practical judgment," Professor Benne next refers to another work, *The Discipline of Practical Judgment in a Democratic Society* (by Raup, Benne, Smith, and Axtelle), which "attempts to do justice to the meaning of Burke's pentad of dramatistic terms in the act of judgment, though without the employment of his terminology." These two books "seem fruitfully to supplement each other"; and they "make at least a beginning in this task of the interpretation of rationality and of contemporary symbolic adequacy." Or, in sum: "'Symbolic adequacy' can only be developed," and "mastery of our linguistic resources (which are ultimately our rational resources) can be achieved if acquired in the dramatic perspective of the significant conflicts of our time."

Among other considerations stressed in this perspective, we might list briefly: Their systematic concern with the principle of "identification" that prevails, for instance, when ruler and subjects, however disparate their ways of living, feel themselves united in some common cause; the gleams of "mystery" and corresponding feelings of guilt that arise when beings of different status are in communication; the modes of *symbolic purification* ingrained in the nature of symbolic action, and culminating in acts of *victimage*; the principle of *completion* to which language vows us, as when we round out a judgment upon others until it returns upon the self (cf. the Kantian "categorical imperative"); the verbal resources of *transcendence*, implicit in the initial momentous fact that the word transcends the thing it names; and, above all, the workings of that marvel of marvels, not present in nature, and found only in the resources of symbolism, the *negative* (with its "completion" or "perfection" in the "thou shalt not").

The approach to human relations through the study of language in terms of drama makes such concerns primary and seeks to build a systematic terminology to treat of human quandaries in such a spirit. It contends that the basic motives of human effort are concealed behind the clutter of the machinery, both technological and administrative, which civilization has amassed in the attempts to live well. It contends that by a methodic study of symbolic action

men have their best chance of seeing beyond this clutter, into the ironic nature of the human species. Yet it seeks to be as instrumentalist as the instrumentation it would distrust. But while it would completely grant that terminologies of motion are properly cultivated in those fields of applied science dealing specifically with aspects of motion (as the physical sciences), it would categorically resist any quasi-positivistic tendencies to treat of the human realm in such terms.

We must here leave many relevant questions unanswered. But we might close this section by a reference to the kind of "short-cut" which we consider primary, where the analysis of particular linguistic structures is concerned:

We refer to the notion that the study of symbolic action in particular literary works should begin with the charting of "equations." That is: When you consult a text, from which you hope to derive insights as regards our human quandaries in general, you begin by asking yourself "what equals what in this text?" And then, next, "what follows what in this text?"

The study of such "equations" is a way of *yielding without demoralization*. One cannot know in advance what the "equations" are to be (what "hero" is to equal, what "villain" is to equal, what "wisdom" is to equal, etc.).<sup>3</sup> Yet in one's search for such "equations," which the author himself *spontaneously exemplified* rather than upheld as conscious doctrine, one is guided by method. Accordingly, such analysis is no mere surrender, though it does set up a preparatory stage in which one wholly "yields" to the text.

Having thus, without heckling, systematically let the text say its full say, even beyond what its author may have thought he was saying, we have the basic admonition as regards man, with relation to his specialty, "symbolic action." We see "exhortations" of terrifying importance being prepared for, even when a writer has no such intentions in mind. For, if certain elements equal "good" and certain elements equal "bad" (or, what is often more important, if

3. As for the importance of such an emphasis, consider the difference between the equation "reason equals respect for authority" and the equation "reason equals distrust of authority." Such equations are studied, first of all, in a non-normative, nonpreferential way, the assumption being that the best function of education is in giving us a free approach to such linkages, which otherwise tend to call forth automatic responses, making us in effect somnambulists.



certain elements equal "socially superior" and certain elements equal "socially inferior"), then in contemplating the "dynamics" of such "equations" (their implied hortatory value), do we not contemplate the very essence of human foibles?

And, at least within the ideality of our educational pursuits, are we not thereby admonished to watch and wait—and not just pre-ceptorially, but technically?

"Dramatism," the approach to the human situation "linguistically," in terms of symbolic action, fulfils its purposes only in so far as it makes methodical the attitude of patience. The "dramatic" may thunder. It should. The "dramatistic," in a commingling of techniques and hypochondriasis, will "appreciate" man's ways of thundering.

### *Educational Aims and Values*

Education, as so conceived, would be primarily admonitory. It would seek to become a sophisticated and methodized set of parables, or fables. Noting how man's distinctive trait, his way with symbols, is the source of both his typical accomplishments and his typical disabilities, education as so conceived would be first and foremost "of a divided mind," and would seek to make itself at home in such divisiveness.

Far too often, education is wholly under the sign of the promissory. The serious student enters school hoping to increase his powers, to equip himself in the competition for "success," to make the "contacts" that get him a better-paying job. Vocational courses almost inevitably confirm such an attitude, since their main purpose is to perfect technical ability, to teach special skills.

The "humanistic" aspect of the curriculum is usually approached in the same spirit, even by those who think of themselves as opponents of the vocational emphasis. The courses are expected in some way or other to help students "get ahead" as individuals. Humanistic education thus becomes the attempt to teach and to acquire the kind of "insignia" that are thought to be proof of cultural election.

This pragmatic emphasis may not always be individualistically motivated. With the project of *The Republic* for the training of the guardians, for instance, the emphasis was rather in the direction of Plato's yearning that education might serve for the triumph of

all Greek states, united in a common cause against the "barbarians." And nationalistic emphases in general would belong here; for although there is conceivable an ideal world of nationalisms that would be related to one another as peacefully as the varied portraits in an art gallery, we need no very difficult fables to admonish us about the ever-ready dialectical resource whereby national "differences" may become national "conflicts."

Only a truly "universal" attitude toward educational purposes can modify this intrinsically *competitive* emphasis. Such an attitude would be grounded in the thought that all mankind has a major stake in the attempt to discipline any tendencies making for the kind of war now always threatening. In this spirit, we would aim at the discovery of methods that would be a *technical* equivalent of such uneasiness as, in religious terms, has been called the "fear of God." And we would seek for a *technical* equivalent of "mortification," thereby hoping to make active and mundane a kind of scruples now too often confined to the separate realm of the cloister.

But such "technicalizing" would produce notable changes of emphasis, since we are here discussing purely *secular* modes of education. In this realm, the pious "fear of God" would be replaced by a partially impious "fear of symbol-using" (that is, an ironic fear of the very resourcefulness that is man's greatest boast). And "mortification" in the religious sense would have, as its secular "dramatic" analogue, a methodic distrust of competitive ambitions which goad us either as individuals or as groups. Or, more accurately: We would try, *at least within the limited orbit of theory, or contemplation*, to perfect techniques for doubting much that is now accepted as lying beyond the shadow of a doubt.

A mere inculcating of "tolerance," "good will," "respect for the rights of others," and such, cannot be enough. Such attitudes are all too airily "positive." And the educational training here advocated would be in its very essence *negative*, as negative as the Ten Commandments.

Yet its negativity would be of a paradoxical sort; we might label it "Faustological," since it would center in the study of ambition as a *disease*. At the same time it would concede that we had all better be very very ambitious and sufficiently exacting in our ambitiousness

to cancel off the many prompter ambitions that, given the new weapons, threaten to destroy us.

The *pragmatic*, the *admonitory*, and the *appreciative* thus merge. For we would study the means by which men have been able to increase their assertiveness; thereby we should be "appreciating" human genius, yet doing so with fearsomeness (albeit a fearsomeness which our technical approach enables us to temper in the kindly spirit of comedy, while we tentatively seek to develop ways of looking upon us all as fools rather than as knaves). But in such tripleness of emphasis, the admonitory (the "negative") is to be treated as "foremost among the equals."

The aim, then, is to droop, at least *ad interim* (within the special conditions of the educational enterprise, considered as but one stage of a person's life)—but to droop so methodically, with such an emphasis upon method, that each day can bristle with assertions, as we attempt to perfect our lore of the human scramble (what Goethe calls the *Zeitenstrudel*, and Diderot the *grand branle*).

Education, as so conceived, would brood, as with the Flaubert who wrote *L'Education Sentimentale*. But in its attempts to perfect a technique of brooding, it would learn to cherish the documents as never before. No expunging of records here. All must be kept, and faithfully examined; and not just that it may be approved or disapproved, but also that it be considered as a challenge to our prowess in placing it within the unending human dialogue as a whole.

If we temporarily risk being *stopped* by such a discipline, let us realize that the discipline is ideally designed precisely to that end. Education must not be thought of merely as a means of preparing students for market, though that's what much of it now is. Education must be thought of as a *technique of preparatory withdrawal*, the institutionalizing of an attitude that one should be able to *recover at crucial moments*, all along the subsequent way.

Admittedly, this view of education as a kind of smiling hypochondriasis presents some difficulties. The promissory, by its very nature, likes to look forward. And there is apparently danger lest youth would either too greatly resist such doctrines as a mere "counsel of despair," or would accept them only too thoroughly, if a whole educational program were undertaken in such a spirit. Per-

haps, the world being what it is, this enterprise could be but one course in a curriculum, rather than the guiding principle behind educational policy in general. But if so, at least it would be conceived of as a kind of "central" or "over-all" course, a "synoptic" project for "unifying the curriculum" by asking the students themselves to think of their various courses in terms of a single distinctive human trait (the linguistic) that imposes its genius upon all particular studies.

Also, there can be much very active enjoyment in approaching the precious documents from this point of view. When the mortifying "fear of man as symbol-user" has been "comically" *technicalized*, such an attitude does not by any means close our horizons but opens many new vistas, making all aspects of symbolic activity somehow "contemporary" with us.

"Drooping," as so qualified, can be quite muscular.

### *Educational Process*

#### METHODOLOGY

Primarily, we are ever to be on the lookout for grammatical and dialectical resources in general, while inspecting particular works for the discovery of special cases that forever keep threatening our frame of generalizations. In this respect, the procedure is not different from the traditional modes of inquiry and placement. But it has a somewhat "existentialist" aspect, in that we constantly re-begin from unique experiences (since each book that we take as our point of departure leads into our generalizations from one unique set of conditions, and accordingly compels us to see them in a perspective never quite duplicated, if we take any other book as our "informing experience"). Later, when discussing the negative, we shall consider another point at which this position closely parallels the existentialist one, if we have interpreted it correctly.

The study is thus built pedagogically about the "indexing" of some specific "symbolic structure," in the attempt to study the nature of a work's internal consistency and of its unfolding. But in contrast with courses in "literary appreciation," the generalizations at which we aim are not confined to a concern with the work's "beauty." Our quest concerns its linguistic nature in general; and

then, beyond that, the insight it may afford into man's ways as symbol-user.

We proceed on the assumption that the "perfect case" for analytic purposes is a definitive literary text. This view, in turn, is doubtless but a variant of the traditional analogy whereby "nature" was likened to a "scripture" which would be legible if one but knew the language it was written in. In this case, the "signs" manifested by a human personality or by a social incident (or social order, or social movement, or cultural trend in general) would be treated as relatively obscure aspects of motivational structures that are least obscure in literary texts. There would thus be no difference "in principle" between textual analysis and social analysis. But though textual analysis would be the "ideal norm" here, there is no reason why specialists in other sciences could not apply the same procedures, *mutatis mutandis*, to their subjects (as with Freud's systematic attention to the "free associations" of his patients, or the use of questionnaires in polls of public opinion). Our major difference (if there is any essential difference!) is in the over-all direction we would give to such procedures.

When the great executive has finished his murder thriller, and relaxed into a well-earned sleep after having gone, by a certain disciplinary route, from the killing of the victim to the killing of the mystery, our vigil has but begun. We must ask: "What does the victim equal? . . . What does the killer equal? . . . What does the virtuously or disingenuously instigatory heroine equal? . . . What are the stages of this journey?" etc.

And we do this, not just to learn something about the given work, but ultimately in the hope of learning something about the ways in which the "personality" of the work relates to the "personality" of a social order; and then, in accordance with our project for methodic drooping, we look for ways whereby the work embodies, however assertively, even militantly, the *malaise* of a given property structure (with the goads, and "mortifications," and demands upon our "patience," and invitations to victimage, that are intrinsic to any such order).

Tragedies are quite convenient for our purposes, since we accept Aristotle's statement that tragic poetry aims at a kind of "catharsis" —and the explicitly civic, stately, or courtly nature of the tragedies

traditionally accepted as great, makes easier our search for routes that clearly link mere "personal equations" with the "great persecutorial words," such as fate, law, right, justice, Themis, Moira, Nemesis, necessity. But other species of expression are also inspected for kinds of catharsis or transcendence proper to their nature.

There are principles and rules of thumb to guide the task of "indexing." And one has available a set of at least partially coordinated statements about the nature of symbolic action in general. With this to start from, teacher and class are on a voyage of discovery together. Ideally, we keep open the channels that take us back and forth between general principles and casuistry, and, whereas certain methods for tracking things down have already been developed, teacher and class are engaged in a joint enterprise for perfecting these. But, whereas the original reading might have sought to track down a "villain," we rather would seek to track down the nature of the author's idea of "villainousness" conceived, not just historically, with regard to the "climate of opinion" that prevailed in a given social order but, universally or formally, with regard to the modes and motives of such symbolizing in general.

We proceed by systematically "suffering" a given text, in the hope of discovering more about the symbolic activity in its particular kinds of sufferance. "Formal discipline" is identical with the carrying out of such an investigation. "Truth" is absolute, in the sense that one can categorically make assertions about certain basic resources and embarrassments of symbols. It is nearly absolute, as regards certain "factual" statements that can be made about the terms of a given work. It is highly problematical, as regards the question that ultimately concerns us most: What is the nature of a symbol-using animal? Here, at least ideally, however emphatic we may become on the spur of the moment, we adopt as our primary slogan: "All the returns aren't in yet." And we would continue to keep alive this attitude (the "Deweyite" emphasis) by embodying it in methods that practically *compel* one to be tentative, at least during the preparatory stage when one is trying to locate all the significant correlations in a book, without deciding whether they are "good" or "bad," but trying rather simply to find out exactly what they *are*.

Since every course in the curriculum is a symbolically guided

mode of action, a placement of all courses from the standpoint of symbolic action violates none of them, though with regard to many scientific disciplines the linguistic approach can be irksome to instructors who would persuade themselves and their classes that they are talking about "objective reality" even at those times when they happen to be but going through sheerly linguistic operations. Since every specialty has its terminology, it can be studied like any poem or philosophic treatise, for its "equations." And, indeed, if you inspect any given scientific writer's terminology closely enough, you can hope to find the bridges that join his purely technical nomenclature with the personal realm.

But though such statements are required for a full account of human action in the realm of physical motion, a "dramatistic" approach by no means requires that laws of motion as such be equated with action. Indeed, we have tried to show how the very self-consciousness of our stress upon action forces us to distinguish action from sheer motion (a distinction that is obscured, for instance, in Aristotle's term *kinesis*, though that very ambiguity is helpful in warning us how the two usages can cross, as when Aristotle himself "dramatistically" discusses the realm of physics in terms of "action" and "passion").

Though the student would not be abiding by the spirit of the enterprise if he merely set about such a fragmentary search as often characterizes doctoral theses, in all methods there is a large percentage of "neutrality," in the sense that a theory of ballistics could be called "neutral," since it could be employed by either side to slay the other. Accordingly, analysis can be carried into lines that take us far from our primary search (any method being ambiguous enough in its potentialities to become detached from the attitude for which it was designed).

Indeed, one can even imagine situations where, even if mankind did amass an authoritative lore on the odd kinds of "somnambulism" to which our nature as symbolists makes us susceptible, there might arise some calamitously endowed "throw-back" who used it all to make things worse rather than better, somewhat as when rules for the cure of souls are transformed into the techniques of "psychological warfare." For, since every point of view has its corresponding "pragmatics," this dilemma of the ambiguities in power or meth-

od is not confined to pragmatism. And, at least, the admonitory aspects of our position can prevent us from thinking of any human resource, such as "mind," "spirit," "eloquence," "imagination," "intellect," "understanding," "rationality," as intrinsically good, rather than as prone to the trickeries (and the grandeurs!) of the symbolic order upon which such resources so strongly rely.

The principle of "negativity" which is basic to the "dramatistic" approach, being essentially of a "repressive" nature (in contrast with liberal practices that often seemed to do all in their power to avoid the spirit of the thou-shalt-not), this approach must cope with the great threat to student interest that goes with such a concern. However, as contrasted with earlier modes of scholastic regimentation, it says no with a difference. It says no *by studying* "no," by trying systematically to discover just how vast a domain the principle of negativity does actually govern, despite our assumptions to the contrary. Nor is such an investigation undertaken purely in the hope that, by such insight, one may be better qualified to emancipate one's self from the "reign of no." One must take it for granted that negativity of some sort is inevitable to social order, as conceived and constructed by an inveterately symbol-using species. And one must remember that the "negatives" of property and propriety are very "positive" in the sense that they affirm the given society's co-operative norms. Negatives shared in common can be like wealth shared in common.

It is not for us a question whether man is naturally good or naturally depraved; it is simply a question of realizing that, as animality in general comprises a set of positive needs, appetites, and gratifications (ultimately reducible to terms of material motion), so the distinctive trait of man, his way with symbols, or languages, centers in his ability to use the negative of "conscience," a symbolically guided ability that is also interwoven with the thou-shalt-not's, or no-trespassing, of property.

#### CURRICULUM ORGANIZATION

To guide our search, we keep in mind a curricular distribution of this sort:

First, there are the sciences of motion, such as physics, mechanics, chemistry, astronomy, geology, mineralogy, oceanography. Though



the building of such disciplines is in the realm of symbolic *action*, their subject matter is exclusively the realm of nonsymbolic motion, *except in so far as they must criticize their own terminology.*

The biological sciences would also fall under the heading of motion, though less absolutely. One may argue that there are the rudiments of symbolism in all living organisms, as attested by experiments with "conditioning" and "unconditioning," alterations of behavior which might be classed as the lowest kind of "learning," or "interpretation." But though one might possibly contend that there are respects in which nonhuman animals could be said to "read the signs," no one, within our present range of knowledge at least, considers any of these species "typically language-using, or symbol-using."

Recent studies of the motions of bees and ants would seem to indicate that these species have a highly organized code of signals whereby individuals can communicate precise information to one another. So it is remotely conceivable that eventually investigators may "crack" the expressiveness of animal gestures sufficiently to find even the rudiments of a grammar in the ways whereby dumb animals behavioristically influence one another by the use of posture and sound to convey the sheerly "motive" equivalents of "meaning."

In any case, we could still propose a way of distinguishing "symbolic action proper" from what we might call "sign-affected motion." Symbolic action proper is attested by a kind of "second-level" possibility. There is a sense, for instance, in which monkeys could be said to use tools as with situations wherein, if two sticks are so constructed that the end of one can be inserted into the end of the other to make a longer stick, the monkeys can learn this operation and apply it to procure something that was beyond the reach of either stick singly. We might call such behavior the rudimentary "inventing of a tool." Yet we should not expect the monkeys to go a step farther and construct the device that made the two sticks joinable. That is, they do not manifest the rudiments of such "second-level" behavior as the making of tools for the making of tools. And human intelligence is marked by this second-level kind of activity, which we dramatically attribute to the kind of intelligence implied in the ability to use language. For language readily uses not only signs but also signs about signs, as general

words can be used to sum up a set of particular words, or as the written word "table" can be a sign for the spoken word, which in turn is a sign for the thing itself, or as we can talk about talk, a glory that attains its somewhat unwieldy flowering in a critic's critical critique of the criticism of criticism.

Empirically and experimentally, at least, that would be our basis of distinction, until or unless further insight discloses the need for different dividing lines. And in view of the respects in which colonies of ants and bees are like burlesques of human social orders, presenting a set of motions that are crudely analogous to the actions and passions of a political community, we think it significant that these species seem to be the ones closest to being capable of human language. Presumably, such complex technology-like regimentation is possible only to a species capable of signalling fairly precise information or instruction.

Though all action involves motion, we may next make a distinction between practical and symbolic action (each of which requires a mediatory ground of motion). Practical action would be ethical (the doing of good), political (the wielding and obeying of authority), economic (the construction and operation of utilities, or powers). To say as much, however, is to realize that the practical realm is strongly infused by the symbolic element (since ideas of goodness, right, and expediency so obviously play a part in these practical acts). Yet in extreme cases at least, there is conceivable a clear distinction between practical and symbolic activity. It is a practical act to get in out of the rain, and a symbolic act to write a poem about getting in out of the rain; it is a practical act to eat, and a symbolic act to speak of eating.

On the *symbolic* side of our alignment, we would make a further distinction, between the "artificial" and the "neurotic." A poem would be an "artificial" symbolic act; and so likewise with a philosophy or scientific theory. While pure theory would be on the symbolic side of our chart, the various *applied* sciences would fall on the practical side, though *books* about them would be but symbolic artifice. Historiography would thus be an aspect of artificial symbolic action, for however real the *man* Napoleon may have been, his place in a history or a biography is that of one symbol among others. He is a *word*.

Rhetoric would likewise be artificial symbolic action. Aristotle calls it a "counterpart of dialectic," thus putting it in the realm of sheer words. But its use for ethical, political, and economic purposes also brings it close to the practical side. For example, Longinus' *On the Sublime* deals largely with examples from oratory that was originally designed for a practical end but, long after the practical occasion had passed, was "appreciated" by him purely as poetry, because of its beauty or "imagination" as a robust symbolic exercising to be enjoyed and admired by readers in and for itself.

The other aspect of the purely symbolic, the "neurotic," might be subdivided into a distinction between those pathological conditions wherein the sufferer is still within bounds of communication and pathological conditions beyond communication. The latter kind (as with complete schizophrenia) might seem almost like a return to sheer motion, as though the sufferer had become but a vegetable; yet indications are that purely symbolic activity may here have attained a "simplicity" and "perfection" of inner consistency not possible to a symbol-system under normal conditions. Within communication would be the various partial "mental" disorders, high among which would also be the realm of "psychogenic illnesses," wherein the *motions* of the body have been radically disturbed by the *passions* that go with disorders of linguistic action. The artificial symbolic action of a poem becomes symbolic action of the neurotic sort in so far as the poem reflects the poet's attempts by purely symbolic means (by "beauties of the imagination") to solve problems that require practical solutions (ethical, political, economic).

But as soon as one stops to think how readily the *artifice* of a poem's symbolic action takes on *neurotic* ingredients, one may congratulate one's self that one's own favorite poets do not thus succumb; or one may congratulate one's self that one is not a poet but a "practical man of action." A linguistic approach to the study of human relations, on the other hand, would suggest rather the possibility that we are "poets all." Maybe, then, with a typically symbol-using creature, no solution of his difficulties but a *perfectly symbolic one* could content him, no matter how practical or normal he may think of himself as being.

The educational process as here conceived is guided by this ironic likelihood: That man can be content with nothing less than perfec-

tion, and that a typically symbol-using species will conceive of perfection in a way that is essentially symbolic, somewhat as "angels" are sheer "message." Our study of poetic ritual, for instance, would be guided by this notion. And some of Santayana's ingenious conceits, concerning the aspirations of the spirit to so transcend material conditions that the mind dissolves into the realm of pure being, would be interpreted by us linguistically as the ultimate human hankering for a condition so thoroughly in keeping with man's differentia that his generic animality would be transformed into a perfect symbol-system. A visible burlesque of such transcendence is seen in the Cyberneticists' dream of reducing all mental operations to their counterparts in the order of *pure* motion. And we all know of journalistic critics who read books so fast and write on them so quickly, their minds are hardly more than a telephone exchange where messages automatically converge and are automatically re-routed.

But here again, we come to the point at which, having stated our absolute position, we can settle for much less, as regards the processes of our study. We need but look for the respects wherein the sociolinguistic dimension is observable in all our actions, whereat these actions become *symbolic* of the principles infusing both a given social order and social order generally. This sociolinguistic nexus is headed in the principle of *negativity*, the astounding linguistic genius of *no*, which merges so perfectly with the conscientious thou-shalt-not's of property.

Thus, in accordance with this view, whereas we would divide the curriculum in ways that allow for the traditional autonomy of the various disciplines, we would so conduct our investigations that we might glimpse, brooding over the lot, a lore of the *universal pageantry* in which all men necessarily and somewhat somnambulistically take part, by reason of their symbol-using natures.<sup>4</sup>

4. In sum: So far as the curriculum is concerned, its specialties would be left pretty much as they are, the biggest division being a variant of the "Cartesian split," in this case involving the distinction between "natural motion" and "symbolic action." But, as with semantics generally, dramatism would place special stress upon the purely terministic elements that might otherwise be mistaken for sheer "objective fact" in the nonlinguistic sense. For instance, laboratory equipment being linguistically guided in its construction, one should expect even the most objective of instruments to reveal a measure of sheerly "symbolic" genius. When considering acts in life, one may have to cut across the special realms of curriculum specialization, in so far as such acts themselves cut across these realms.

*School and Society: Social Philosophy*

Imagine an educational ladder of this sort:

On the lowest rung would be the training of students in accordance with immediate local purposes, a mode of "indoctrination" designed to assert a narrowly partisan point of view in subjects of a "controversial" nature, and to deflect attention from any social philosophy at all in subjects of a "free" nature, such as "pure" literature.

The kind of education on the next higher rung would be just as narrowly partisan in its aims but more prudent in its ways of working toward such aims. It would be wider in its range so that the student would also know something of other views, because such knowledge would better equip him to combat them. Looking upon all enemies, or even opponents, as instruments of the devil, it would nonetheless seek to give the devil his dues, not because we owe the devil anything, but because we owe it to ourselves to know his powers.

Next above the second rung would be a more "humanitarian" view of alien ways. Holding that people generally have great moral virtues, it would, like the ethnologist, anthropologist, or sociologist, seek to describe and "appreciate" other groups, in all their varied habits, strengths, and shortcomings, not for partisan purposes, but purely in accordance with ideals of "truth" or "scientific accuracy." Although its findings would have been made in an impartial spirit, they could also be applied to narrower ends. In this respect, the third rung would be but the highest region of the second rung. Otherwise, it would be on a new level, having passed a "critical point."

A fourth rung would be involved in a much more complicated set of maneuvers. Here, the kind of material assembled in investigations on the third rung would be treated as voices in a dialogue. One would try to decide how many positions one thinks are important enough to be represented by "voices," and then one would do all in one's power to let each voice state its position as ably as possible. No voice deemed relevant to the particular issue or controversy would be subjected to the quietus, and none would be inadequately represented (as were one to portray it by stating only its more vulnerable arguments). But although one would be as fair as possible in thus helping all positions to say their say, a mere cult of "fair play"

would not be the reason. Rather, one hopes for ways whereby the various voices, in mutually correcting one another, will lead toward a position better than any one singly. That is, one does not merely want to outwit the opponent, or to study him, one wants to be affected by him, in some degree to incorporate him, to so act that his ways can help perfect one's own—in brief, to learn from him.

This fourth principle of education is the most mature of the lot, and the one that would surely be aimed at, in an ideal world of civilized and sophisticated people. But for that very reason, it is very difficult to maintain, except in glimpses and at happy moments. What actually happens in education is that, to varying degrees, all four of these emphases fluctuantly prevail. And if each were signalized by a different light that came on when it happened to be the dominant educational motive in the classroom and went off, to be replaced by the glow of whatever light signalized the motive that next took over, doubtless during a typical session the four would be flashing on and off continually. And though the one signalizing the fourth rung would certainly wear out last, it would have its moments, too.

Though a linguistic approach to education could somewhat fit the needs of all four emphases (naturally being most cramped when used for rung one, which might be called the "*Us über Alles*" rung), it is not quite identical with any of them. Nor could we arrogate to it a rung still higher than the fourth. Rather, there is a sense in which, as we said regarding "free" subjects taught in the lowest rung, it would in principle deflect attention from *any* social philosophy. For social philosophies are partisan philosophies, and the study of man as symbol-using animal would deal with *universal* traits of the symbol-using species. (We shall later discuss reasons why such a principle cannot in all purity prevail.)

Thus, whether confronting a "conservative" philosophy or a "progressive" one, we should set out dramatically to analyze the structure of its statements, considered as symbolic acts. We'd ask what terministic devices are used here, how they combine, etc.

In this sense, a linguistic point of view would be not so much a step "up" or "down" as a step to one side. It offers a technique for stopping to analyze an exhortation precisely at the moment when the exhortation would otherwise set us to swinging violently. It

confronts a *practical* use of language for rhetorical effect by a *theoretical* study of such usage.

A linguistic approach to human relations would probably be happiest with democracy, of all political systems, since democracy comes nearest to being the institutionalized equivalent of dialectical processes (with such hopes of maturing an opinion as we discussed in connection with the ideal dialogue of education at rung four). But Plato, greatest master of the dialogue form, has warned us that democracy is liable to degenerate into tyranny, owing to an unmanageable excess of liberty. And in practice, democratic states move toward a condition of partial tyranny to the extent that the channels of expression are not equally available to all factions in important public issues. Thus we see democracy being threatened by the rise of the enormous "policy-making" mass media that exert great rhetorical pressure upon their readers without at the same time teaching how to discount such devices; and nothing less than very thorough training in the discounting of rhetorical persuasiveness can make a citizenry truly free, so far as linguistic tests are concerned. But we can say that *ideal* democracy does allow all voices to participate in the dialogue of the state, and such *ideal* democracy is the nearest possible institutional equivalent to the linguistic ideal.

As for the question whether schools should be leaders or followers of social change, the linguistic approach confronts us with some paradoxes, which are due in part to the fact that the labels on social philosophies can rarely be accurate. For one can never be quite sure how a doctrine will perform, once it enters into combination with many other factors in life that are beyond its control, and even beyond its ken. We can always expect "unintended by-products." Think how many determined Marxists have been produced by anti-Marxism, while Marxism has produced quite an army of determined ex-Marxists. And sometimes an unreasonable teacher in a grade school can serve as an object-lesson more effective than precepts for teaching students how not to be unreasonable. Nothing is more unforeseeable than the fate of a doctrine at the hands of its disciples.

There is a sense in which the study of man as symbol-using animal can be tied to as many different local faiths as can the view that there is or is not a personal God. The analysis of language quickly

teaches us the importance of *combinations*. A thinker can start with an unpromising term but can surround it with good ones, while another person can start with an excellent term and surround it very dismally indeed.

But secondarily, a linguistic approach involves us in a social philosophy because of its accidental relation to certain social forces that may happen to favor or hinder it. It must be secular, for instance; for though it is not antagonistic to religious doctrine, it must approach such doctrine *formally* ("morphologically") rather than as doctrinally true or false. Accordingly, churchmen themselves can admit of such a formal approach, and often have done so; but where they would not do so, the linguistic approach would find itself accidentally allied with a *secular* "social philosophy." Or, if pressure groups who are so minded and can exert sufficient influence objected to the stress upon linguistic sophistication, then "dramatism" would find itself allied with a liberal social philosophy, even in a militant sense. And, of course, the position is uncompromisingly liberal in the sense that its first principle must be the systematic distrust of any social certainties as now set (our position here necessarily reaffirms the Deweyite prizing of the experimental attitude, backed by experimental method).

Naturally, we identify such a program with both patriotism and international co-operation. It should be an aid to patriotism by helping to make demagoguery more difficult and by fostering an attitude that would make international co-operation easier. It would sharpen our sense of the fact that all men, as symbol-users, are of the same substance, in contrast with naïve views that in effect think of aliens as of a different substance. Dramatism thus, by its very nature, implies respect for the individual. Again, we should recognize that our stress upon the major importance of the negative may seem "reactionary" to some liberals, particularly those who have striven valiantly to find ways of "not saying no" to children.

Perhaps we might best indicate the nature of our social philosophy by referring to the kind of "linguistic exercising" that we think wholly in keeping with the spirit of this project:

If one should read in a newspaper some "factual" story that obviously produced a pronounced attitude for or against something, while reading it one would try to imagine how the same material



might have been presented so as to produce other attitudes. It is not, thus, a matter of deciding about the "factual accuracy" of the story, a matter about which in most cases you will not be equipped to make a decision. You will permit yourself speculatively a wider range of freedom as regards its *stylization*. That is, you counteract "slanting," not by trying to decide whether the reporter is honest or a liar, or even whether he is fair or unfair, but by leaving unquestioned the facts as given and merely trying to imagine different ways of presenting them, or by trying to imagine possible strategic omissions.

Or, were the earlier pedagogic practice of debating brought back into favor, each participant would be required, not to uphold just one position but to write two debates, upholding first one position and then the other. Then, beyond this, would be a third piece, designed to be a formal transcending of the whole issue, by analyzing the sheerly verbal maneuvers involved in the placing and discussing of the issue. Such a third step would not in any sense "solve" the issue, not even in the reasonable, sociological sense of discovering that, "to an extent, both sides are right." Nor would we advise such procedures merely as training in the art of verbal combat. For though such experience could be applied thus pragmatically, the ultimate value in such verbal exercising would be its contribution toward the "suffering" of an attitude that pointed toward a distrustful admiration of all symbolism, and toward the attempt systematically to question the many symbolically-stimulated goads that are now accepted too often without question.

Or a student might write an essay analyzing the modes of utterance in two previous essays he had written, one of which traced man's progress "upward" from "savagery" to the "high standard of living" provided by modern technology, while the other treated this same development as deplorable "degeneration," with profound tribal conscientiousness overgrown by a wilderness of superficial abstract law.

We can never sufficiently emphasize, however, that we are thinking of education as a tentative, preparatory stage in life, not as a final one. It is final only in the sense that it possesses its own kind of completeness and thus, ideally, should be recoverable at all stages in one's life. For it develops to perfection one stage in the confront-

ing of a problem, the stage where one steps aside as thoroughly as possible and attempts, in the spirit of absolute linguistic skepticism, to meditate upon the tangle of symbolism in which all men are by their very nature caught.

The corresponding methods of interpreting man's entanglements have been sloganized by us elsewhere as the "socioanagogic," since a primary aim here is to discover in what respects the objects of this world are enigmatic emblems of man's relation to the social order (that is, in what respects they may possess for man a "symbolic" character, over and above their nature as sheer *things*). Since language, however manipulated by the individual user, is essentially a collective or social product, the powers of the social order will inevitably be manifested in it, quite as these powers can only be developed by the use of linguistic resources. A social philosophy, as so conceived, would be built about four orders: the verbal or linguistic; the sociopolitical; the natural; the supernatural. And we shall end this section by briefly indicating the relation we think they bear to one another.

The verbal pyramid is most clearly revealed in the design of Platonist and Neo-Platonist dialectic, the upward way from particulars to higher and higher orders of abstraction, matched by a corresponding downward way from the one to the many which are imbued with the substance of its oneness. Such resources become interwoven with whatever social order happens to prevail, or to have prevailed when the symbolic traditions were taking form. Such order has its more or less clearly defined pyramidal structure, with criteria for distinguishing the direction socially up from the direction socially down. Here we would look for the situations which gave form to the terminology for familial relationships, and to the great persecutorial words that grandly sum up the principle of negativity inherent in the nature of property.

Third, there is the natural order, whether conceived along Aristotelian lines (as in the medieval concern with the "great chain of being,") or along Darwinian lines, charting an evolutionary "descent" from "lower" kinds of entities to "higher" kinds. This is the order that, in the dramatistic terminology, is most fittingly discussed in terms of motion.

And finally, there are terms for a supernatural order, a terminology

constructed after the analogy of the other three, since there can be no empirically literal vocabulary for the description of a realm that by definition transcends the conditionality of human language and human experience. That is, if the ultimate scene, or "ground of all possibility" is called a "lord," a supernatural relationship is being named metaphorically, in terms of what is, so far as our institutions are concerned, an obsolete social relationship. And the description of God as "simple" is in accordance with certain dialectical resources that permit of progress toward an over-all "term of terms" that will sum up complexity much as the title of a novel could be said to simplify the myriad details by one word that stood for the single spirit infusing them all. And terms referring to God as a body would be borrowed from the natural order.

But there is a paradox upon which a dramatist philosophy of social motivations lays great emphasis: Whereas we are by the nature of the case compelled to see the part that the other three orders of terms play in the terminology of the supernatural order, and whereas we are familiar with the transcendentalist dialectic of a writer, say, like Emerson, who contrives to interpret the many agencies of the everyday world as all variously embodying a single supernatural purpose, it is much harder to detect the ways in which the linguistic and social orders affect our ideas of the natural order. And this is the enigma, above all others, with which dramatism, as a social philosophy, is engrossed.

By the socioanagogic emphasis in linguistic criticism, we refer to a concern with the ways in which the structure of the social and linguistic orders affects the metaphors men use for the supernatural order and colors the "empirical reality" which men think they perceive in the natural order. We believe that the natural order is profoundly infused with symbolism, "mystery," and "divinity" of a purely secular and social sort, however transcendent its gleam may sometimes seem to be. Here, we believe, is a major source of man's exorbitant goads and false exaltations. We believe it to be a major source of the scramble so incessantly plaguing great nations that most persons seem to take it as "the norm," sometimes assuring us that man is "naturally predatory," and sometimes in unconscious sacrilege interpreting such worldly struggle as an evidence of man's "divine discontent."

An educational policy constructed in accordance with this principle would ground its techniques in a social philosophy that looked upon such inquiry as the ultimate end of secular study. But one could not know what the actual "alignments" in such a project would be, what social forces would be for it and what against it, unless it were actually attempted on a considerable scale.

### *The School and the Individual*

But our zeal for the negative or admonitory in education should not seem to prevail over its counterpart, the lore of "positive" appreciation. With regard to the three major aims of education as so conceived, training in skills, moral admonition, and aesthetic appreciation (note that they are secular or technical analogues of the trinitarian three: "power," "wisdom," and "love"): Here would be an excellent point at which to remember the claims of the third.

Skills, we might say, are like the metal of a coin. On its reverse side is stamped the negativistic, admonitory social or moral philosophy of language. But on its obverse there are markings of a wholly different sort, to signalize the realm of aesthetic delight.

In so far as the suffering of man's hierarchal burdens is to be as a growing old, the aesthetic affirming of the resources natural to such conditions is like being born anew, as with the "equations" of Goethe's *Faust*. (And perhaps if we accept a pedagogically "mortifying" device that makes us theoretically old while we are still physically young, we may get "as a bonus" a compensatory device that can keep us theoretically young when we are physically old.)

When we are under the sign of appreciation, the very same things that we had considered "droopingly" can now be viewed with almost the expectant air of a young puppy, that seems always brightly ready for some astounding thing to happen. Here is our chance for an Emersonian recovery, an aesthetic "compensation."

The negatives we would impose upon the individual (or rather, the negatives we would have him recognize as having already been imposed upon him by the combination of the social and linguistic orders, as re-enforced by the mechanical necessities of the natural order) are "collective," bearing upon his obligations to the tribe, and to himself as member of the tribe. Here would be a secular variant of "original sin."

But in contrast, his positive, aesthetic enjoyments can be received

by him as an individual (though the public nature of the symbolic medium, through which he aesthetically receives, makes it unlikely that individual delights of this sort can be merely "solipsistic"), and the zeal with which we tell others of our enjoyments indicates how eager we are to "socialize" everything, a tendency which the social nature of language would help impose upon us, but which cannot outweigh the fact that when *you* enjoy the taste of a particular orange, it is being enjoyed by you and none other.

So, although the tribal negatives are uniquely translated into the decisions of each individual "conscience," and although aesthetic enjoyment, too, has its "tribal" aspects (as with the distinctive exaltations that can affect public gatherings), we would treat the aesthetically positive under the head of "the school and the individual," whereas the moralistically negative seems to have fitted best under the head of "school and society."

As regards this relation between moralistic admonition and aesthetic appreciation, once you "get the idea" of the pattern, you see how readily all ethical misgivings can become transformed into aesthetic promises, thus:

Have we proposed a distrust of ambition? Then see, on the other hand, what great tragic assertions have been made of this distrust, as with the grotesqueries of *Macbeth*, or the stateliness of murder in *Julius Caesar*. Do we discern how the motives of sheer ownership figure in relations between husband and wife? Then note how these are made almost exultant in *Othello*.

Does a writer seem to suggest that he despises all *people*, either in particular or in general? Then note how, by the very scrupulousness of his work, he shows that he most earnestly respects an *audience*. And no matter how questionable the scramble, there is a gallantry, an essential cult of the compliment, implicit in the earnestness with which a good artist will bring the best he has to market, even though he suspects that, by not making it worse, he may sell it for less.

Is there an overriding fear of death? Then see how the poet exploits this attitude to the ends of pomp, in the hope of infusing his work with a funereal, corpse-like dignity.

Is there a need of victimage, to relieve ourselves by thoughts of a vicarious sacrifice? Must we look for a goat? Then see how such impulses are made grand by the devices of tragedy.

Does the weight of a social order oppress us grievously, driving

us within ourselves, imposing upon us the involuntary vows of psychogenic illness, making us prone to fantasies of sexual perversion that represent, in terms of erotic appetite, the jealousies and malice and self-punishments typical of the "hierarchal psychosis"? All this may, by the "alchemy of the word," be transformed into an aesthetic "remembrance of things past," that loves to contemplate the pageantry of corruption. And the tangled social motives may come to take the form that Stanley Hyman has called the "Albertine strategy" (having in mind Proust's resources whereby a heterosexual love is imagined not directly, but roundabout, by the aesthetic perverting of an experience that, in the real moral realm, had been *homosexual*).

Have we questioned the entire modern cult of gadgetry by which the wheels of industry are largely kept going, over and above production for war goods? Then note how this same gadgetry becomes the pleasant movement and glitter of a spectacular Hollywood revue, in which woman plays a leading role, as the gadget of gadgets. Well-groomed, specious flesh clothing the skeleton.

There is no tangle so hopeless that it cannot, with the symbol-using species, become the basis for a new ingenious assertion that transcends it, by the very nature of linguistic assertion. No way of life can be so wretched, corrupt, or even boring that some expert symbol-user or other can't make it the subject matter of a good book. Wherever you might moralistically exclaim, "How awful!" there is the opportunity for the aesthetic to answer spiritedly, "But how *delightfully* awful!"

In sum, there is the transcendence in expression as such (the point emphasized in the Crocean aesthetic). Atop that, there is the transcendence implicit in the processes whereby the work "purifies itself" in the course of its unfolding. And beyond that, there is transcendence by the various ways whereby we feel ourselves similarly purified while undergoing the imaginary discipline of the story's action and passion (undergoing such either as spontaneous spectators or as students, or both). And so, each time we inspect a great work of human thought (that is, a great symbolic exercising), we can be delighted by the manifestations of its genius, a skill whereby even the accents of lamentation can be transformed into the pleasurable.

Here is a glorious realm of *solutions*. Here is easy going, atop hard going. But such expression is at the same time fearsome by reason of its very felicity, in so far as the availability of such cunning resources may tempt us to perpetuate an underlying moral ill by cultivating the happy exercise that makes it beautiful. A familiar example appears in the popular art patronized by commercial advertisers which helps make insatiable in real life the very appetites which it symbolically gratifies in the world of make-believe. In any case, by dodging between aesthetic positives and moralistic negatives, one seeks to improvise the "good life." Such an attempt is always complicated, as Aristotle's *Ethics* reminds us, by the fact that, before one can live *well*, one must contrive to *live*.

However, when we attempt charting the good life, we must be linguistically shrewd about our own statement, too. There is always the invitation to express such matters in terms more or less flatly opposed (polar terms, they have often been called), with some variant of the thought that what we want is a middle road between the two extremes. A variant is the discovery that, where two opposed principles are being considered, each of which has the "defects of its qualities," what we want is something that avoids the typical vices of either and combines the typical virtues of both. Or, dialectical resources being what they are, we can readily propose that any troublesome *either-or* be transformed into a *both-and*. Thus, when thinking of "authority, control, and discipline" on the one hand, and of "freedom and initiative" on the other, most people are likely to opt for a moderate mixing of the two. "There should be both respect for the individual and subordination of the individual to the group; there should be both patriotism and internationalism, in happy balance; education, as the projecting of traditions into new situations, must combine conservative and progressive tendencies; student interest must not be stifled by overly authoritative guidance, yet the student should not be deprived of such guidance where he requires it," etc. Such linguistic resources suggest why even excessively one-sided educators might tend to think of themselves as serving under the sign of the golden mean.

And there can be further very good reasons for such a view. As regards the relation between authority and freedom, for instance, the investigating of symbolic action is still in a highly problematical

stage, while many teachable principles and rules of thumb have already been formulated; and this situation of itself almost compels one to ask of the student a kind of discipline not distinguishable from pronounced personal initiative.

And there is always the aura of *promise* in education, a promise implied when it is not made explicit. This promissory motive came to the aid of the various fly-by-night outfits that quickly cooked up likely looking courses to profit by the situation of the returning soldiers, with funds at their disposal under the G.I. educational bill of rights. Courses in vocational training draw especially on such hopefulness, on the willingness of the student-customer to be assured that, if he takes the course, he will somehow have a much better chance to hit the "jack pot" and thereby to experience the deliciously immoral thrill that occurs when a slight gesture, made accidentally at the right time, disproportionately calls forth an abrupt unloosening, an indecent downpour, of revenue.

Thus, the promise will be there to some extent, even when it's false. And it should never be wholly false, so far as a linguistic approach to education is concerned. For the analysis of symbolic action should not only sharpen kinds of perception that are competitively useful to the manipulating of symbols, it should also contribute to our lore of human foibles in general, and so make for much sheer shrewdness as regards the ways of the scramble. This should be particularly the case if the study of linguistic tactics is extended to a "post-Machiavellian" kind of inquiry in a realm where purely rhetorical devices overlap upon a realm of nonverbal materiality, as with the pronouncements of promoters, politicians, diplomats, editors, and the like, whose use of purely symbolic resources is backed by a tie-in with organizational or bureaucratic forces.

But, ideally at least, viewed in "the absolute," an educational program of this sort would come closer to such promises as were once called the *consolatio philosophiae*. Admonition would make of education a watching and waiting, appreciation would seek out the positive attitudes that corrected such negatives. Its great stress upon linguistic skepticism would imply that it is not designed to make up the student's mind for him. For it could not arrogate to itself the right (or assume that it had the ability) to anticipate the *particularity* that characterizes an individual's decisions. In fact, it cannot even deny its knowledge of paradoxical cases where training



can be a sheer handicap to a man, as when the sudden introduction of new technological methods required that the former experts be discharged, since their very fitness for the old ways made them less fit for the new ways. It can, however, make such considerations an important part of its teaching, in accordance with the particular kinds of quizzicality in which it would become at home.

Education, as so conceived, would be willing to give full recognition to every important favorable and unfavorable factor in a given situation. If it failed to meet such tests, the failure would be caused by lack of knowledge or perception, not by any categorical claims to individual, professional, national, or universal rights or dignities, except the right and dignity of doing all in its power to study the lore of such rights and dignities.

Such, then, is what we take to be the nature of education as "preparation for adult life." The obligations of order hang over us, even if we would revolt against order. Out of such predicaments, ingenious fellows rise up and sing; thus promptly have all our liabilities been by symbol-using converted into assets. Similarly aesthetic, from this point of view, is any way of analytically *enjoying* the ways of rising up and singing. These ways may be "diagnostic," as all education in one sense is. And so we are led back to the realm of the admonitory.

And finally, and above all, in keeping with our "socioanagogic" search for the ways in which the magic of the social order infuses men's judgments of the beautiful (quite as it infuses their ethics and their perception of even "natural" things) we watch everywhere for the manifestations of the "hierarchal" motive, what Ulysses, in *Troilus and Cressida*, calls "degree." It is only "by degree," he declares, that communities, schools, brotherhoods, businesses, inheritance, the prerogatives of age and office, even the regularities of nature, "stand in authentic place." Accordingly, "Take but degree away, untune that string, / And, hark! what discord follows; each thing meets / In mere oppugnancy." And later, with a strange imagistic paralleling of *Othello*, he sums up: "Chaos, when degree is suffocate, / Follows the choking." We cite from this long passage, not exactly to reaffirm the Shakespearean answer, but to recall how vast, in the perspective of Shakespearean drama, was the scope of the question.

### *School and Religion*

The study of religion fits perfectly with the approach to education in terms of symbolic action. What more thorough examples of symbolic action can be found than in a religious service? What is more dramatistic than the religious terminology of action, passion, and personality? What terminology is more comprehensive than the dialectic of a theologian? What is linguistically more paradoxical than the ways wherein the mystic, seeking to express the transcendently ineffable, clothes theological ideas in the positive imagery of sheer animal sensation? Where, more perfectly than in versions of the heavenly hierarchy, can we find the paradigms of hierarchal terminology? And, as regards the principle of negativity, where does it figure more ultimately than in the dialectical subtleties of negative theology?

The great depth and scope of religious terminologies; the range of personalities and problems that have found accommodation within the religious framework; the kind of "inner freedom" that goes with the cult of ultimate praise made possible by the religious rationale; the religious placement of beauty and the practical; the ways in which religious scruples can sharpen even purely secular kinds of sympathy and awareness—to think of such matters is to realize that the long tradition of religion provides us with a field of study as vital and as sweeping as the over-all history of human culture itself.

Thus we could state unequivocally that the language of religion is the most central subject matter for the study of human relations in terms of symbolic action. Or perhaps we should make the claim even more specifically, in saying that the central concern would be not just religion, but *theology*, that is, the strict realm of dogma, and of a church's symbolic practices (its rites and rituals) as placed in terms of its dogmas.

But though ideally the dramatistic approach heads in the study of religious forms, the social obstacles are obvious. First, in a nation of many faiths, there would be embarrassment in the mere singling out of any one doctrine for special study, in a secular school. Second, dramatism would also require a systematic concern with the *misuses* to which a religious terminology can be put, as when its spirituality becomes a sheer rhetorical shield for the least spiritual

of special interests. And though, if nothing else were involved, a truly religious person might be expected to welcome any teachings, from whatever source, that help admonish against the misuse of religion, there are many kinds of susceptibility here that make such considerations unadvisable.

Consider, for instance, the frenzy with which Molière was attacked for his comedy, *Tartuffe*, his enemies proclaiming that religion itself had been slandered in his portrait of a religious hypocrite. And even though a dramatistic analysis of such matters would be much milder, since it would but "study" temptations that Molière sought to make dramatically salient, it could not go far without raising resentments that would militate against its own purposes, by intensifying the very passions it would assuage.

Fortunately, the main concern in a dramatistic treatment of religious language (and of the rites rationalized by such a language) resides elsewhere. There are broad principles of theological placement that can be studied, for instance, when one is studying modes of placement in general. Thus, when considering the formal relationship that prevails between "scene" and "act" in a systematic terminology dealing with such matters, one can include various theological pronouncements in a list that also includes various secular treatments of the same problem. And by such means, theological considerations can be introduced relevantly, without much risk of the embarrassments that might result if a class of secular students were to "index" any one religious terminology as thoroughly as they might index a novel or drama.

A dramatistic stress could not simply omit such subjects, however. For the position is based on the awareness that religious terminologies have charted with especial urgency and thoroughness the problems of "sin" and "redemption" as these take form against a background of hierarchal order. Here, then, are the grandest terminologies for the locating of the attitudes that, by our interpretation, are grounded in the feeling for negativity, the "idea of no," a symbolistic genius that makes itself felt in a variety of manifestations. Examples of such manifestations are sacrifice, mortification, penance, vicarious atonement, conversion, rebirth, original sin, submission, humility, purgation, in brief, "conscience"; thence secondarily in rejections, revolts, impatiences; and so with intermediate realms like indiffer-

ence, betrayal, psychogenic illness, attempts to resolve social antitheses; and finally in the purely technical realm, as with the ability to know that the words for things are not the things, that ironic statements are to be interpreted in reverse of their surface meaning, and that the range of language can be extended metaphorically without error only if we know how to "discount" a metaphorical term.

There is a crucial paradox in the dramatistic approach to religion, however. For whereas it leads to an almost minute interest in the *letter* of the faith, requiring a particular stress upon the terms that specify *doctrine*, *dogma*, its approach to such elements is not doctrinal, but formal. That is, it does not ask: "Is such a doctrine literally *true* or *false*?" Rather, it asks, "what are the relationships prevailing among the key terms of this doctrine?" And: "Can we adapt the terminology to other terminologies, at least somewhat?" For instance, one might ask whether theological statements about "original sin" could fit with a purely secular notion that there is a kind of *categorical guilt* implicit in the nature of all sociopolitical order, with the malaise of its "degrees," a malaise sharpened by the feeling for negativity, as embodied in the "rights and wrongs" or "yeses and noes," of man's linguistically heightened conscientiousness.

Such a secularly formal (or, if you will, "aesthetic") approach to the literal particularities of dogma must be insufficient, as judged by the tests of advocates who would proclaim one doctrine and no other as the whole and only truth. But though educators, being concerned with preparations rather than fulfilments, might for their pains be classed among those "trimmers" who after death were denied even entrance into hell, since they could not wholly die through never having wholly lived, yet as regards the needs of education for the "global" conditions that technology is imposing upon us, precisely such a deflection seems particularly needed at this time. For it would seem to go as far as humanly possible toward the forming of such attitudes as are required if men of many different faiths are to participate in a common parliament of all nations and are to confront one another in an attitude better than mere armed neutrality, or in a diplomatic silence whereby all sorts of very important things are left unsaid. For though any specific measure can be debated in such a spirit, a world organization can flourish

"positively" only in so far as all its members can work toward a frame of reference common to all.

It is the thesis of this essay that, since all divergent doctrines must necessarily confront one another as doctrinal "idioms," a framework for the lot could be provided only by the perfecting of some terminology for the study of idioms in general. A terminology as so conceived must necessarily adopt some point of view in which all could share. And a formalistic view is such a one, at least in principle. We say "in principle," since there are still valid points of disagreement as to whether a "dramatistic" species of formalism should be the kind to opt for. And Professor Benne, in this "dramatism," would prefer a "tragic" to a "comic" one, for reasons he has explained in his article on "Education for Tragedy." We only contend that a *generally* linguistic approach to the problem would be the proper counterpart of the purely pragmatic arrangements for having addresses at the United Nations translated into several languages and having choices among these translations made quickly available to the various delegates, with the help of machines.

The same considerations apply, of course, to purely "secular religions," notably such political philosophies as capitalism or dialectical materialism. These, too, are terminologies of action, hence essentially "dramatistic" in structure—and whatever their vast disagreements, they can at least meet in terms of their nature as terminologies of action. Admittedly, such an approach is not enough to resolve specific issues that lead to blunt, head-on collisions. One cannot ask an educational method to do the impossible. But one can ask that it provide a positive equivalent for the area of commonalty which even opponents must share, if they are to join the same battle.

Where the various "persuasions" are brought together, what topic surely transcends them all but the question of persuasion itself? If one particular persuasion among the lot could triumph, then we'll concede, however grudgingly, that such a result might be all to the good, though at the very least we'd want to suggest: The differences among the various areas of the world would soon give rise to new local emphases that, to many, would look like outright heresy, whereat the squabbles would begin anew. For such are the temptations to which the symbol-using species is prone, by reason of the

nature of symbols. And, for these reasons, at least so far as the linguistic approach to educational problems is concerned, we believe that, *faute de mieux*, the nearest man will ever get to a state of practical peace among the many persuasions is by theoretical study of the forms in all persuasion.

It is regrettable that the author of the greatest rhetoric wrote his tract before the data on the great world persuasions were available to him. So, while Aristotle's formal treatment of the subject remains, to this day, the greatest of its kind, regrettably he had but comparatively trivial examples of verbal wrestling to analyze (trivial, that is, as compared with the symbolic ways of the great world religions, both worldly and other-worldly, that took form since his time, or since the awarenesses available to him). But the principles remain intact; and they are in their very essence dramatistic; and a search for the *forms* of persuasion, as exemplified in later materials, might very profitably abide by the suggestions which his treatise provides. Nor should we forget that, elsewhere in his own work, he supplies the further forms needed for a most ingenious locating of the hierarchal motive, the motive grandly essential to the modes of submission ("Islam") that characterize the world religions.

All such persuasive powers, the heights of symbol-using genius as embodied in definition, expression, and exhortation, we would with fearsomeness appreciate. Such is the dramatistic variant of the linguistic approach to education, an approach now often called "semanticist."

### *Epilogue*

But suppose that all did turn out as we would have it, so far as educational programs went? What next? What might be the results?

First: In seeing beyond the limitations of language, many might attain a piety now available to but a few. Many might come closer to a true fear of God, through getting more glimpses into the ultimate reality that stretches somehow beyond the fogs of language and its sloganizing.

Or, on the contrary: There might descend upon mankind a boredom such as never before cursed symbol-using creatures. For all men might come to so distrust the motives of secular ambition, as clamorously established by all who help make secular aims "glamor-

ous," that the entire pageantry of empire would seem as unreal as a stage set.

But those are the absolute alternatives: the alternatives of absolute piety (or "loyalty to the sources of our being"), and of absolute drought (be it mystic "accidie" or Baudelairean "spleen").

But here, in parting, once again we would "settle for less," holding out the hope of only this much: That such an approach should help some of the rawness to abate, by including a much wider range of man's symbolic prowess under the head of the fearsomely appreciated, and thereby providing less incentives to be overprompt at feeling exalted with moral indignation.

In the educational situation, characteristically, the instructor and his class would be on good terms. They would preferably be under the sign of goodwill. And is not education ideally an effort to maintain such an attitude as thoroughly and extensively as possible without loss of one's own integrity? If, where we cannot "love" our neighbor's ways, we might at least "fearsomely appreciate" their form, and in methods that bring our own ways within the orbit of the "fearsomely appreciated," would we not then be at least headed in the right direction? And is not this direction most urgent, in view of the new weapons that threaten not only our chances of living well but even our chances of living at all?

#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There is a general sense in which *any* book could figure in a "dramatistic" bibliography, since any book is by definition an instance of "symbolic action." More narrowly, we should include here works that are built about the featuring of some term for "action," ranging all the way from theories of economic or commercial "transactions" to theologies that view God as "pure act." Spinoza's *Ethics* is a good example of the type, because of the symmetry with which it explicitly works out a balance of actives and passives.

All writers who have figured in the shift of emphasis from philosophy to the critique of language could be listed here, as with the traditional battles over "universals" (with nominalists and realists throwing equally important light upon the normal resources of language, and upon our language-ridden views of extralinguistic "reality"). In this regard, even the most positivistic or "scientific" of semantical theories could properly be included in our bibliography.

And though the empiricist stress of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume would be inferior to the scholastic tradition, when judged as philosophy, its admonitions as regards a critique of language are nearly perfect for our purposes. Our main shift of emphasis would be in the direction of a greater concern with the ways in which sociopolitical motives infuse men's views of their so-called "sensory" perceptions. Similarly, psychoanalytic and psychosomatic speculations fit well with the dramatistic emphasis, because of their great stress upon forms of sym-

bolic action, though as with empiricism, the overly psychologicist stress usually somewhat deflects attention from the sociopolitical realm of motives.

Specifically, by "dramatism" is meant a linguistic theory expressly built about the study of such terms as "action," "passion," and "substance," and designed to consider language in the light of the logic, resources, and embarrassments of such terms. It would be more likely to stress *verbs* than *nouns* as the way-in, though for this very reason it finds itself paradoxically quite friendly to Jeremy Bentham's search for ideal definition in terms of nouns (with his "theory of fictions" designed to take account of the respects in which strongly verb-like and negatively tinged nouns would not lend themselves to his materially positive ideal). Likewise this approach finds much to its purposes in works as different as James Harris's *Hermes* and the redoubtable Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley* (with its stress upon the nature of "abbreviations" in language).

In this specific sense, a systematically self-conscious statement of the dramatic perspective is offered in *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives*, by Kenneth Burke (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945 and 1950, respectively). The *Grammar* considers the logic of "substance" in general, the *Rhetoric* considers its place in personal and social "identifications." Also, both books offer many examples of the way in which works by other writers can be interpreted as implicit contributions to the dramatic perspective.

As regards the ethical dimension in language, see particularly "A Dramatic View of the Origins of Language" (*Quarterly Journal of Speech*, October and December, 1952, February, 1953) and "Postscripts on the Negative" (same publication, April, 1953).

A work now in preparation, *A Symbolic of Motives*, will deal with poetics and the technique of "indexing" literary works. Meanwhile, among articles by the present author already published on this subject are: "The Vegetal Radicalism of Theodore Roethke" (*Sewanee Review*, Winter, 1950); "Three Definitions" (*Kenyon Review*, Spring, 1951); "Othello: An Essay to Illustrate a Method" (*Hudson Review*, Summer, 1951); "Form and Persecution in the *Oresteia*" (*Sewanee Review*, Summer, 1952); "Imitation" (*Accent*, Autumn, 1952); "Comments on Eighteen Poems by Howard Nemerov" (*Sewanee Review*, Winter, 1952); "Ethan Brand: A Preparatory Investigation" (*Hopkins Review*, Winter, 1952); "Mysticism as a Solution to the Poet's Dilemma," in collaboration with Stanley Romaine Hopper (*Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature*, edited by Stanley Romaine Hopper, published by Institute for Religious and Social Studies, distributed by Harper & Bros., 1952); "Fact, Inference, and Proof in the Analysis of Literary Symbolism," (paper presented at Thirteenth Conference on Science, Philosophy, and Religion, and published in a volume distributed by Harper & Bros., 1954).

The author's first book of literary criticism, *Counter-Statement* (originally published, 1931; republished with new Preface and Epilogue, 1953, by Hermes Publications, Los Altos, California) is relevant to these inquiries because it treats of literary form in terms of audience appeal. His *Permanence and Change: An Analysis of Purpose* (originally published, 1935, revised edition published, May, 1954, Hermes Publications), centers about problems of interpretation, communication, and "new meanings," though the perspective is there called not "dramatic," but "poetic." An out-of-print work, *Attitudes toward History* (New Republic, 1937) deals largely with problems of bureaucracy (now often called "organizational behavior"). Another out-of-print work, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (Louisiana State University Press, 1941) considers many problems of "indexing," and outlines the theories of "symbolic action" that lie behind such analysis.

Miscellaneous items: *Nous Autres Matérialistes* (*Esprit*, November, 1946),



analyzing the motives in the "higher standard of living"; "Rhetoric Old and New" (*Journal of General Education*, April 1951); "Ideology and Myth" (*Accent*, Summer, 1947); "Thanatopsis for Critics: A Brief Thesaurus of Deaths and Dyings" (*Essays in Criticism*, October, 1952), a study of motives involved in the imagery of death; "Freedom and Authority in the Realm of the Poetic Imagination" (*Freedom and Authority in Our Time*, Twelfth Symposium of the Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion, edited by Lyman Bryson, Louis Finkelstein, R. M. MacIver, Richard P. McKeon, distributed by Harper & Bros., 1953). In a symposium on "The New Criticism" (*American Scholar*, Winter, Spring, 1951), Burke at several points discusses what he means by the "socioanagogic" approach to literary forms.

For an authoritative summary of the "dramatistic" position, see "Kenneth Burke and the 'New Rhetoric'" (Marie Hochmuth, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, April, 1952).

Kenneth D. Benne's article, "Education for Tragedy" (*Educational Theory*, November and December, 1951) while agreeing with Burke's general emphasis, offers grounds for a "tragic" species of such, in contrast with Burke's "comic" view. See also Kenneth D. Benne's essay-review, "Toward a Grammar of Educational Motives" (*Educational Forum*, January, 1947) for his evaluation of Burke's *Grammar of Motives*, from the standpoint of educators who arrived at the dramatist position by a somewhat different route. And see also, in this regard: *The Improvement of Practical Intelligence: The Central Task of Education*, by R. Bruce Raup, George E. Axtelle, Kenneth D. Benne, B. Othanel Smith (Harper & Bros., 1950).

While concerned with the sociology of literature in ways that only partly coincide with Burke's emphasis, Hugh Dalziel Duncan's *Language and Literature in Society* (University of Chicago Press, 1953) offers a thorough analysis of ways whereby the dramatistic perspective can be applied to problems of sociology. Donald E. Hayden's *After Conflict, Quiet; A Study of Wordsworth's Poetry in Relation to His Life and Letters* (Exposition Press, New York, 1951) is constructed in accordance with a dialectic pattern quite relevant to the dramatistic view of symbolic unfoldings. And among those many excellent volumes in the *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*, particular attention should be called to "The Development of Rationalism and Empiricism" by George De Santillana and Edgar Zilsel (University of Chicago Press, 1941).

Works such as Francis Fergusson's *The Idea of the Theater* (Princeton University Press, 1949) and Herbert Weisinger's *Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall* (Michigan State College Press, 1953) almost inevitably fall within the "dramatist" orbit, because of their great stress upon dramatic forms. Fergusson's more recent book, *Dante's Drama of the Mind* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1953), is strongly dramatistic in its treatment of the *Purgatorio*; and it is particularly relevant to our purposes if, as we read it, we see it as implicitly concerned with the "hierarchal psychosis."

## CHAPTER IX

### *Aims of Education for Our Age of Science: Reflections of a Logical Empiricist\**

HERBERT FEIGL

#### *Introduction*

Logical empiricism (alias: "logical positivism," "scientific empiricism," "unity of science movement") is not a system of philosophy in the traditional sense. In its more ambitious—or perhaps presumptuous—phases, logical empiricism presented itself as the philosophy to end all philosophies. No matter whether or not this extravagant claim is justifiable, it is true that logical empiricists have neither pursued the search for absolutes nor attempted to provide a well rounded *weltanschauung* (world view and life view). Their major contribution has been the development of methods for the clarification of basic concepts, assumptions, and procedures in the fields of knowledge and valuation. Consequently, lest false expectations be aroused, it must be stressed at the outset that, strictly speaking, there are no direct implications for education in the outlook of logical empiricism. The understanding with which the present assignment was undertaken, was therefore this: While there is no distinctly logical empiricist philosophy of education, there are important educational aspects in the scientific humanism which, as a general and fundamental attitude, underlies the thinking of the logical empiricists. To articulate and to illuminate those educational aspects is the purpose of this essay.

Since logical empiricism is essentially a methodology, its educational consequences can be derived only indirectly—and in either of two ways: First, as just suggested, there are the basic evaluations that underlie the outlook of scientific empiricism. These can be made explicit and discussed critically. In this manner certain *aims*

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and *ideals* of education can be formulated and scrutinized. Secondly, the *ways* and *means* of education could be appraised if the requisite knowledge regarding means-ends relations is sufficiently well established in the light of the criteria of validity which indeed are a major subject of the analyses with which logical empiricists have been so deeply concerned. The educational applications are thus twice removed from the primary concerns of the work of logical empiricism: The analyses pursued by this movement in contemporary philosophy have resulted in a logic and methodology of the sciences.

Inasmuch as any responsible educational policy must draw upon the knowledge provided by the sciences—especially, of course, psychology and the social sciences—education, very much like the technologies or medicine—is essentially *applied* science. Education presupposes the pure sciences in the same sense in which the activities of agriculture presuppose biological and chemical knowledge, and the endeavors of the politician, social worker, or social reformer presuppose sociological knowledge. But pure knowledge, i.e., knowledge regarding what happens (or what is likely to happen) under what conditions, while of paramount importance, is in and by itself not sufficient to lend *direction* to the various activities which apply such knowledge in human affairs. Physiological or biochemical knowledge, for example, could be used (and has been used occasionally) to produce illness or death, rather than improved health which of course is the more usual aim of medical practice.

In addition to knowledge there are thus presupposed ends, aims, purposes, valuations, and preferences which make up the very frame of the enterprise of applying knowledge. The distinction here drawn between knowledge and valuation is itself one of the main results of logical empiricist reflections. It was clearly stated as early as in David Hume's philosophy in the eighteenth century and has been successively reformulated and refined by many empiricist philosophers ever since, especially in our century. In what follows, primary attention will be given to the educational ideals as they appear in the light of the logical empiricists' basic values; and only secondarily shall we deal with questions of educational technique as they may be appraised on the basis of modern psychology and social science.

*Some of the Main Principles of Logical Empiricism*

Before turning to a discussion of educational ideals, a brief outline of some of the major tenets of the logical empiricist outlook is requisite. The main original achievements of the movement are to be found in its contributions to the philosophy of language and in the logic of the sciences. Many of these contributions are of a highly technical character and require for their understanding and appraisal a good background in mathematics, mathematical logic, semantics, and the methodology of the natural and the social sciences. Fortunately, our present purpose calls only for a presentation of the fundamental philosophical position.<sup>1</sup>

Logical empiricism has often been hailed as the twentieth-century sequel to the philosophy of eighteenth-century enlightenment. Just as the renaissance of science in the seventeenth century engendered the empiricist and naturalistic philosophies of the eighteenth century, so the radical transformations of the scientific outlook at the beginning of our century produced a turning point in philosophy. Owing to cultural lag, the prevalent philosophies in each of these periods remained still largely in the bondage of traditional theological and metaphysical systems. Emancipation arose from the need to shape a philosophical outlook that would be more consistent, not only with the results of science, but especially with the spirit of modern scientific method. It has been stated and repeated—perhaps *ad nauseam*—that ours is an age of science and that mankind has not grown up morally and socially, and not even intellectually, to be sufficiently well adjusted to the tremendous changes that have been wrought by modern science. These changes concern not only the view of the universe but also the practical conditions of life which resulted from the applications of science in every field of human activity. It has become imperative to abandon the dogmatic, other-worldly, supernaturalistic, tender-minded, rationalistic, parochial preconceptions and to replace them by critical, worldly, naturalistic, fact-minded, empirical, experimental, and universally applicable ways of thinking.

On the intellectual-cognitive side there arose an ideal of “mature thinking” which reflects the major virtues of the scientific capacity

1. For more detailed information on the historical roots, the systematic contributions and comparisons with related movements in present and recent philosophy, see the appended bibliography (especially: 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, and 15).

for self-correction, clarity, consistency, definiteness, and precision, as well as for adequacy, reliability, objectivity, and fruitfulness. Perhaps more than any other school of thought, the logical empiricists have made it their business to analyze in great detail and with impressive systematic power the norms and standards that characterize scientifically enlightened reasoning. The scope of the present essay permits only a very sketchy summary of the conclusions of the analytical work of logical empiricism.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE BIOPSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MATURE INTELLIGENCE

A useful and suggestive initial appraisal of the human equipment for mature thinking can be readily obtained from a biopsychological survey, more especially from developmental and comparative psychology. Comparing animals and man, the most striking differences lie in the much greater role of instincts and simple learning processes in animals and in the long, elaborate, complex learning phenomena, supplemented significantly by a much higher level of ingenuity and of symbolic behavior (language) in human beings. In the human case, the relatively poor instinctual equipment becomes immediately overlaid and increasingly modified by the acquisition of habits of expectation and action through learning and imitation. From an early age ingenuity, i.e., the ability to combine elements into new complexes and configurations for the overcoming of difficulties and the solution of problems, distinguishes *homo faber* (the tool-using man) from the animals—with the possible exception of the anthro-poid apes. But the most profound difference between human and subhuman organisms consists in the exclusively human possession of language.

Human language differs from animal communication in that it is characterized by syntactical, semantical, and pragmatic rules. Corresponding to these rules on the behavioral level are the habits of the use of linguistic symbols. These habits are, of course, developed

2. Space does not permit anything like a fully argued justification of the following presentation. The reader is asked to bear with the dogmatic tone which is merely the result of extreme condensation. Consultation of the following books and articles listed among the references at the end of the chapter will help in obtaining a more complete view of the matter: 2, 4-6, 8-11, 13-16, 19, and 21.

by training in the process of education. Animal communication, with the possible exception of the social insects, does not seem to possess a semantical (let alone syntactical) structure and thus consists almost exclusively of the functions of expression and appeal (evocation). On the human level all three functions of language (representation, expression, and appeal) are present and assume highly refined and complex forms, as in science or poetry. The development of scientific knowledge may well be considered as a further stage in the evolution of man—*homo sapiens* now, the talking animal. The accumulation of a body of testable, reliable, precise, coherent, and comprehensive knowledge establishes, indeed, a level of adaptation that is higher than that of primitive man with his poorly tested and unorganized knowledge, shot through with superstition.

Finally, perhaps even a step above scientific knowledge, there is the human capacity for critical reflection: the ability to examine the presuppositions of our activities, and in the light of such critical examinations to make explicit what is so often unquestioningly taken for granted, and thus to be able to eliminate prejudice and to revamp the very frame of our thinking and doing. This is one of the most powerful endowments; but perhaps it is also one of our most neglected resources. Reform activities of all sorts—be they concerned with the individual as in psychotherapy or in education, or with the group, as in social, political, or economic reform—are based upon critical reflection in the sense defined. Philosophy, as conceived by the logical empiricists (but in very much the same manner already by Socrates), is essentially critical reflection—inasmuch as it attempts to explicate and to examine first principles.

Human intelligence, as we have tried to indicate, is not a single faculty or capacity but a many-storied structure of abilities which evolution brought forth and thus produced the paradox of modern man—splendidly equipped for the struggle of existence, and yet deplorably inept in the use of this equipment for his own benefit. It is true, along with *science*, man also developed *conscience*. And, along with conscience, he frequently produced appeasing but spurious rationalizations, self-deceptions, consolations, and a whole assortment of neurotic (if not psychotic) escapes from reality. The ideal of individual and social integration toward a deeply satisfying life has more often been preached than practiced. It will require

strenuous and vigilant efforts on all the fronts of reform, and especially on the educational front, to help mankind grow up toward the sort of maturity our present world requires for greater sanity and happiness, if not even for its continued existence. But more of this later.

There are certain basic philosophical lessons that can be gleaned from a study of the factors and levels of intelligence. No matter how the present controversies in the psychological theories of learning may ultimately be settled, there are some conclusions which are fairly firmly established: Patterns of expectation and of action develop through the responses of the organism to repeated stimuli (or stimuli-configurations), and through trial and error (fumble and success), i.e., under conditions of positive or negative reinforcement. These reinforcements consist in the satisfaction (or frustration) either of basic biological needs (like hunger or sex) or of the varieties of secondary and tertiary needs (interests) as they are typical of the human cultural level (needs for security, recognition, love, equity, new experience, pure knowledge, or aesthetic gratification).

From the trial-and-error aspect of learning we derive the philosophical lesson that learning is most effective if we avoid the extremes of both the complete rigidity of dogmatism and the utter fluidity of skepticism. Only the golden mean of the critical attitude will, in the long run, produce the best adaptations. The dogmatic mind, if ever it was open at all, may have swallowed some "truth" at one time and remained shut tightly ever after. The mind of the extreme skeptic, floundering in perpetual doubt, is, so to speak, open at both ends—everything flows through it, and nothing sticks. A certain persistence is indispensable in the search for truth. How else could one find out even that one was wrong in one's expectations or assumptions? The critical attitude cautiously works with the truths that are sufficiently confirmed by the testimony of experience and calls into serious doubt only those which are poorly confirmed. But even the best established generalizations are held valid only "until further notice"; they are kept open for revision in principle, no matter how firmly we may rely upon them until such revision is forced upon us.

This is the essence of the empirical, experimental attitude. In this point there is, I think, full agreement among all empiricists—be their

historical inspiration biology (as in the case of John Dewey's pragmatism) or be it the logic of science (as with the logical empiricists). I remember Einstein in one of his early public lectures saying about his theory of relativity that it would become "dust and ashes" if certain astronomical verifications were not forthcoming. *This* is the spirit of modern science, but—alas—not of modern thought in general. It is true, we laugh contemptuously about the (probably apocryphal) dictum of Hegel's: "If the facts don't agree with my theories, so much the worse for the facts." But would not a little soul searching reveal how guilty most of us are in this same respect—usually without being aware of it (we trust!)?

#### THE POSITIVISTIC ACCOUNT OF THE RISE OF THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE

The attainment of mature thinking has been characterized as the result of a progressive development through several phases. Auguste Comte, the originator of positivist philosophy (as well as of the science of sociology) more than a hundred years ago, taught that the intellectual development of man begins with a theological phase, passes through a metaphysical phase, and finally culminates in the "positive" or scientific phase. In the light of more recent historical and cultural-anthropological research, this scheme appears as a gross oversimplification. Magical, animistic, and mythological ways of thinking cannot without severe distortion be subsumed under the theological phase. Moreover, the succession of the phases in various civilizations (and especially in the development of individuals from infancy to maturity) varies, of course, considerably. Nevertheless, if not from a historical and psychological-genetic point of view, then certainly from the philosophical perspective, it is still useful to compare the characteristic features of those diverse *prescientific* ways of thinking with those of scientific thinking.

Scientific thinking, at least where it is at its best critical level, is distinguished by the virtues of intersubjective (objective) testability; of a high degree of reliability, of definiteness (or precision), of coherence (or systematic structure); and of comprehensiveness (or scope). Each of the prescientific ways of thinking lacks one or the other of these characteristics which are essential, or at least highly desirable for the attainment of the goals of knowledge: adequate



descriptions, explanations, and predictions of the facts of experience. Magical thinking—while in principle capable of objective test—fails miserably when the test is applied. It lacks reliability (to put it mildly!). This is the case of the countless superstitions of mankind—be they occasional and sporadic (as in everyday life) or worked into systems like alchemy or phrenology (of old), or like astrology, quack medicine, and other assorted pseudosciences (old or new).

Sharply to be distinguished from magical thinking (conceived here as in principle subject to objective confirmation or disconfirmation) is the animistic way of thinking which proposes explanations of observable natural phenomena in terms of in-principle-unconfirmable entelechies, spirits, demons, souls, ghosts, and the like. Thriving upon seductive analogies and anthropomorphic metaphors (the personification of things), pseudoexplanations are offered which may be poetically appealing but which remain scientifically empty. This is so, however, only where disconfirmation is excluded deliberately by making the introduced animistic hypotheses proof against disproof. Wherever testability is not in principle ruled out, the assertions in question may be regarded as hypotheses and thus appraised in accordance with the usual norms of scientific reasoning (inductive probability, parsimony, etc.).

Most empiricists look with great suspicion upon the hypotheses of vitalism in biology, of mind-body dualism, of psychical research, and of so-called "empirical theologies" which base their arguments on the observable facts of the world. They are inclined to reject hypotheses of this type, not necessarily as meaningless, but as superfluous in that it is likely that the observable facts in question can be more simply explained in terms of physical, biological and psychological principles—i.e., within the frame of the usual "naturalistic" account of the world. A truly open-minded empiricist, however, will cheerfully admit that the term "naturalistic" does not have a precisely delimited meaning, unless it be understood as synonymous with "empirical." But in this case there is no way of knowing *a priori* what sort of concepts and hypotheses may yet be required for the explanation and prediction of observable fact.

The concepts of electromagnetics, for example, were introduced in addition to the then customary concepts of mechanics in nineteenth-century physics; and this led to an expanded conception of

"nature" and to a more comprehensive type of "naturalistic" explanation. It is quite conceivable that this sort of expansion may become necessary again and again. Naturalism is, therefore, a tenable philosophy only to the extent that it coincides with an open-minded, yet cautious, empiricism. Naturalism in this sense is essentially different from materialism which in its reductive zeal (as in the "thingification of persons," if the phrase be permitted) has often attempted prematurely to close the world picture by admitting only a certain type (traditionally the mechanistic type) of scientific explanation.

Nevertheless, animistic, theological, and metaphysical assertions are often so conceived that they are immune against tests of any sort, and thus become a matter of "pure faith." In that case they must be considered as nonscientific (or, as the logical empiricists generally would claim, noncognitive), even if they operate with (verbally) sharply defined concepts, display a rigorous logical structure, and (claim to) offer comprehensive explanations of all there is. These virtues of definiteness (precision), coherence, and comprehensiveness amount to naught as far as nature-explanation is concerned, if the premises of theological or metaphysical explanation are so formulated as to render any sort of even partial or indirect test impossible. It has happened that even in the history of scientific thought, hypotheses were framed which were ingeniously (but unwittingly) protected against disconfirmation. Typical examples are: the doctrines of absolute space and time; the phlogiston, caloric, and ether hypotheses in their more desperate last-ditch stands; the vitalistic doctrines assuming some special nonphysical life forces or telefinalities for the explanation of the admittedly marvelous features of organic life; etc. The progress of science in many fields often depended upon a preliminary purging by which untestable ideas were removed and replaced by concepts properly connected with actual or possible evidence.

Educationally, and with regard to the ideal of mature thinking, it is worth noting that under conditions of extreme tension, frustration, or distress there occur frequently regressions from the scientific to prescientific patterns of belief. Hitler employed astrologers to advise him in his strategic issues (this is a magical thinking). King Xerxes of old had his slaves whip the Aegean Sea with iron

chains in punishment for its unruly behavior—it had thrown up big waves preventing Xerxes' ships from crossing it (animistic thinking). The explanation and the treatment of mental diseases in terms of a theory of "possession by evil spirits" is another example of the less-recent past. Quite generally, the "failure of nerve" and the return to orthodoxy of one sort or another may be viewed as a regression to less-mature forms of thought and behavior.

While purely intellectual analysis alone will not suffice to prevent regressions of this sort, the value of the clarifications offered by modern methods of analysis and enlightenment should not be underestimated. We now turn to a more systematic presentation of the implements of logical-empiricist enlightenment.

#### THE USES OF LANGUAGE AND THE MEANINGS OF "MEANING"

The essentials of the critique of prescientific thinking can be brought out even more succinctly by a little exercise in the semantics of the word "belief." This important term of our language is deplorably ambiguous. If serious confusions are to be avoided, three different meanings must be distinguished. There is, first, the meaning of "belief" which may be characterized as *empirical* because it is at least in principle capable of being examined as to its truth or falsity in the light of observational evidence. Many of the knowledge-chains of common sense as well as the generalizations and hypotheses of responsible science belong in this category. Wherever the facts of direct observation can lend credibility (or incredibility), i.e., probability or evidential support of any degree to assertions (no matter how close or remote they may be relative to the evidence), we deal with belief of the *empirical* sort. But if belief (as "pure faith") is so conceived that it is compatible with no matter what facts of observation, then this is belief of the *transcendent-metaphysical* sort. This kind of belief cannot be probabilified by any evidence whatsoever. There is no difference (except in purely verbal or pictorial, emotional, motivative aspects) that *makes* a difference between the assertion and the denial of such beliefs. It is in this point that they differ sharply from beliefs of the empirical sort.

There are, finally, uses of the word "belief" which are clearly designed not for making a knowledge-claim but for the expression of an attitude. "Belief" in equal rights for all or in the dignity of man

is (usually) the expression of a *commitment* to an ideal or to a "cause." From the point of view of logical empiricism the effective component of "beliefs" in the second sense reduces to "belief" in the third sense. That is to say that beliefs which are made safe against disproof have, at best, emotional-motivative significance but no factual meaning-content in the sense in which assertions of matter of fact contain truth-claims. Obviously, some care and subtlety is required in the disentanglement of the meaning(s) of given utterances. For example, the sentence, "I believe in democracy" may *convey* the solemn *commitment* of the speaker to the cause of a government of, by, and for the people; it may also represent an *autobiographical description* (cognitively true, if sincere; false, if hypocritical) of the speaker's attitude; or it may be an elliptical *statement* of the equally factual meaning: democracy is the most equitable form of government for all concerned. Only through Socratic questioning or self-questioning can it be determined *which* meaning is at stake in a given context.

The lesson exemplified in the case of the word "belief" can be generalized and made into a more comprehensive account of the functions of language and the meanings of "meaning." It is very illuminating to distinguish first of all between the cognitive and the noncognitive types of significance. Language when used cognitively (i.e., in behalf of knowledge-claims) may be said to function *representatively*. But language is also *expression* in that it reflects the feelings and attitudes of the communicator; and it is *appeal* (or evocation) in that it is designed to influence the communicatee. This influence may result in immediate action or else in a change of attitude on the part of the communicatee. Most uses of language involve all three factors: representation, expression, and appeal. Practically and psychologically these functions are so intimately interwoven, that only an analytic effort can separate out the components which, from a logical and philosophical point of view, must be carefully distinguished if clarity of thought is at all to be achieved.

The expression and appeal functions of language are, of course, very closely related and may be subsumed under "noncognitive" or "emotive" meanings. These may usefully be subdivided into pictorial, emotional, and motivative types of significance. By means of pictorial appeals images are evoked; emotional appeals evoke feel-

ings and sentiments; motivative (directive, dynamic, pragmatic) appeals effect or affect action, mold dispositions—and are thus of the greatest significance in all practical affairs in which persuasion, propaganda, indoctrination, suggestions, requests, imperatives, or commands play a prominent role. Especially worth noting is the almost ubiquitous technique of *persuasive definitions* by means of which words (like “liberty,” “slavery,” “the good society,” “progress,” “regress,” “maturity,” etc.) which possess strong positive or negative appeals may be given various factual meanings—whereby (often unwittingly, if not surreptitiously) very striking feats of directing or redirecting attitudes may be achieved.<sup>3</sup> Training in the quick recognition of the devices of persuasion, and of their differences from whatever (if any) informational content that may be combined with them, is, of course, of the utmost importance in our age of constant and incessant mass propaganda.

Perhaps the most essential but also the most resented and disputed principle of logical empiricism is its criterion of factual meaningfulness. As already suggested in the discussion of the meanings of “belief,” a sentence is meaningful in the sense of conveying information (true or false) regarding matters of fact if, and only if, it is in principle capable of at least partial and/or indirect confirmation (or disconfirmation) by means of some data of observation. Sentences which do not have factual meaning may be significant in other ways—i.e., in carrying emotive appeals, or in having a formal (syntactical) structure which renders them necessarily true or necessarily false.

Purely logical truths, such as those of the law of identity or of noncontradiction are indeed as devoid of factual content as are self-contradictions. Inasmuch as the truths of arithmetic may be reduced to the truths of logic, they too are tautological in character, do not provide information about the world of facts precisely because they hold by virtue of stipulations and definitions which no amount of experience could force us to abandon or modify. Quite to the contrary, one might say that no matter what the facts of experience are, logic and arithmetic will be needed to describe them consistently—precisely because the rules of logic and mathematics are nothing but rules to which any language must conform if it is

3. Cf. Charles L. Stevenson (21) pp. 210 ff.

to describe facts without contradiction.

Returning to the meaning criterion, it should be noted that this is not to be interpreted as a proposition but rather as a proposal, a stipulation designed to prevent intellectual perplexities and self-deceptions. The formula which states the meaning criterion thus does not fall under its own scrutiny. The justification for its adoption consists simply in the realization that language used and understood in conformity with the criterion will not lead us into certain sorts of confusion and will not permit the asking of in-principle-unanswerable questions. Two very simple examples must suffice here to illustrate the point. It has been maintained that if two bodies move relatively to one another, at least one of these bodies must have absolute motion. Absolute motion is here understood as motion with respect to an absolutely unobservable "absolute" space. It is easily seen that if such an absolute space, contrary to the supposition, were in some sense empirically identifiable, it would indeed be a true (and even logically necessary) proposition that at least one of the two bodies moves relative to absolute space.

This is merely a tautological consequence of the definition of motion relative to a chosen frame of reference. But given the metaphysical conception of absolute space, it would be (logically) impossible to decide which of the two bodies is "really" moving. According to our supposition, the absolute frame of reference is strictly undetectable, and the question, therefore, forever unanswerable. Another example: Assume there is transmigration of souls such that, when one person dies, his soul emerges in a newborn child. Assume further that no memories or influences of any sort are carried over from one existence into the next; that no conceivable test could decide whose soul inhabits which new body. There is then no difference in the in-principle-observable facts which would correspond to any of the (verbal, emotive) differences in the assumptions. The proper criticisms of doctrines whose truth cannot possibly be distinguished by any test from their falsity must then be that the presence of factual meaning was an illusion engendered by mistaking purely emotive or purely formal significance for factual meaning.

Even more generally, logical empiricism, along with other schools of thought in present-day analytic philosophy, exposes as gratuitous

perplexities or pseudoproblems questions which rest on confusions of meaning. Instead of attempting to answer such questions, the questions themselves are subjected to a searching scrutiny of meaning. In the process one may often encounter some related or vaguely adumbrated questions which are perfectly meaningful but possibly very difficult to answer. Here it is wise to proceed cautiously and conservatively. We certainly must not cavalierly repudiate as meaningless questions for which we have at the moment no technique of decision, but where the discovery of such a technique or of relevant data is not logically excluded by the manner in which the question is proposed. There are countless unanswered questions in science—and many of them may remain unanswered for all we know, mankind may not exist long enough to work out an answer. But a question which is so construed that it prevents any responsible answer whatsoever should be regarded as a pseudoproblem.

#### THE SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTION OF REALITY, MIND-BODY, AND FREE WILL

The clarifying power of the analysis of language and meaning (sketched in the preceding section) may be illustrated by applications to some of the perennial issues of philosophy—issues that continue (curiously enough) to be the concern also of educational philosophers. Is what we call “the real world” something that exists independently of being perceived or conceived? Or is reality merely a logical construction based on the data of direct experience? In one form or another this issue has exerted an almost morbid fascination upon the philosophical mind throughout the ages. Educational philosophies have been made to depend on the various answers—realistic, idealistic, pragmatist, etc.—that one may give to the puzzling question. If reality exists independently and is knowable at least in some of its aspects, then—it is held—classical education is right in its essentialism, because there is a body of knowledge accumulated in the development of science which concerns reality and whose transmission is achieved by teaching and learning from generation to generation.

Opposing this view are the pragmatists, experimentalists, or instrumentalists who do not acknowledge any fixed reality as the object of knowledge, and who claim that all knowing and learning is basically in the nature of problem-solving. It seems to me, to begin

with, somewhat incongruous, if not ridiculous, to attempt a justification of educational techniques ("learning by doing" *vs.* "learning by absorption of established information") by reference to philosophical convictions which are so remote from the practical considerations which alone could have relevance for the educational issue. Be that as it may, educational philosophers may be interested in the analysis which logical empiricists have given of the problem of reality. To make a very long story very short, it may be said that there is an empirical, cognitively meaningful concept of reality, used in common life and merely refined in science. Whether we say, "There are matches in this box," or "There are bacteria in this glass of milk," or "There are electrons in this copper wire," or "There is a magnetic field in this region of space," or "There is an unconscious wish in X's mind"—in all these examples we assert the existence of something (of things, states, conditions) in the spatio-temporal-causal network. Since the data of observations themselves are located within this same network, it is possible to anchor the meaning even of highly inferential hypotheses empirically by connecting them logically with these data. To ask for more than this would be extravagant.

Practically all our knowledge transcends (in this entirely unmetaphysical and unobjectionable manner) the data of direct experience. If we were to insist on the principle that underlies subjective idealism or radical phenomenalism, and stick to it consistently, the scope of knowledge would be restricted to the experiential data of the present moment—a doctrine labelled "instantaneous solipsism" and not seriously held by any philosopher. Statements regarding the past, the future, the world of physical objects, the mental states of other persons, the unobservables of modern physics, etc., are all perfectly meaningful, precisely because they are capable of at least indirect and incomplete confirmation or disconfirmation. If there are any statements which are completely and directly verifiable they concern *my* experience at *this* moment.

The wish to have this sort of direct access to what, by its very conception, is outside the scope of the immediate data is chimerical, not because we are somehow "walled in" by the limits of our experience, but simply because it would be self-contradictory, e.g., to assume that we could be simultaneously both "here" and "there,"



“now” and “then,” “I” and “thou,” etc. The perplexities of the reality problem are thus (largely) due to a confusion of the concept of *empirical existence* with the notion of the *directly given*. Knowledge must indeed be *based* on the data of observation; these data are the testing ground of all our factual assertions—be they descriptions, laws, existential hypotheses, or theoretical assumptions. But this *evidential basis* of knowledge claims is (practically) never identical with their *cognitive reference*. The evidential data of the historian are clearly in the present (or future), but his statements concern the past—which is irrecoverably inaccessible to direct observation. The astrophysicist’s data may consist in the spectra he observes on photographs obtained through telescopes and spectroscopes in his terrestrial observatory—but his knowledge claims may refer to the physical and chemical constitution of stars millions of light years away from him.

The empirical realism here suggested combines the justifiable claims of the empiricist criteria of meaning and validity with the sound elements of common sense and scientific realism: The only meaningful way in which we can talk about reality is in terms of what it is knowable as—the conceptual structure which is anchored in experience and designed to reflect whatever facts and regularities are confirmed and confirmable by experience. But this conceptual structure, if it is to do justice to the most pervasive features of experience, must be “realistic” in the sense that the knowing subjects are themselves represented in it as parts of the same world which is the object of knowledge. Small parts of physical space and late arrivals in evolutionary time, this is the place of *homo sapiens* in the universe. An adequate theory of knowledge must reconstruct the relations of the knower to the known in such a manner that these obvious naturalistic conclusions are not distorted.

This outlook enables the logical empiricists also to propose a solution of the mind-body problem, a puzzle which has caused so much dispute and so many perplexities, especially in modern philosophy. Very briefly again, such a solution based on a sound realistic epistemology and compatible with the general results of current psychophysiology, amounts to a double-language theory of the mental and the physical. What we designate by mentalistic, subjective or introspective terms as states or acts of mind is em-

pirically identical with what the neurophysiologist designates as brain processes in his language. The apparent plausibility of alternative views—especially of interactionistic-dualistic doctrines concerning mind and body, is due (partly) to the striking contrasts in pictorial appeals of the mentalistic and the physical language. Once it is realized that emotive appeals quite generally are irrelevant as regards the cognitive content of scientific statements, the identity of the factual reference of the two languages will appear no longer paradoxial.

What follows from all this for the educational issues of learning and teaching? I am inclined to say: nothing that reasonable people have not known all along without the benefit of any systematic philosophy. Since the only meaningful way of talking about the objects of knowledge is in terms of what we can possibly know about them, our attention must concentrate on *both* the *ways* and the *results* of knowing. To stress method at the expense of content must educationally be as foolish as to concentrate on content and to neglect method. There is a tremendous body of well-ascertained knowledge in a variety of fields. The growing child, the adolescent, and also the adult, constantly require information for the immediate practical purposes of their existence as well as for that broadening of their experience which is of the essence of the intelligent and the cultured life.

Adoption of a monistic view of mind and body may help in counteracting some of the more exaggerated aspects of the traditional elevation of the spirit and disparagement of the flesh. Under the influence of the teachings of many religions, mind-body dualism appeared as an indispensable presupposition for the moral messages of altruistic and brotherly love. These moral teachings are not only compatible with a modern scientific and logical empiricist conception of mind-body identity but they can even more effectively be defended on this basis. First, there is an obvious confusion if the "passions" are identified as purely physical (pertaining to the body) and man's ideals are located in his "spirit." Prescientific, especially animistic, conceptions stubbornly linger on in the language, if not in the thought, about moral virtues and standards.

The monistic view, far from denying the differences between actions impelled by basic physiological drives and those controlled

by scrupulous and conscientious deliberations, merely tries to allocate them correctly within the scientific conception of the human organism. The human cerebral cortex does exert an integrating and restraining effect upon the impulses which originate in the glandular system. We don't need the hypothesis of an immaterial soul or spirit which in turn controls brain activities. All we need is the philosophically monistic assumptions according to which certain processes in the cerebral cortex are empirically (not logically) identical with the directly experienced qualities of wishing, willing, thinking, scrutinizing, deliberating, choosing, deciding, etc. It is these cortical processes which, interacting with the processes in the rest of the organism, exert their control over our actions.

The dualistic hypothesis of an immaterial but causally efficacious spirit may be rejected as factually meaningless if it is so construed as to be absolutely incapable of tests; or, if it is introduced as a genuine hypothesis, it may be said to be strongly disconfirmed by the scientific evidence on hand. The principle of parsimony, one of the guiding maxims of scientific theorizing, rules against "multiplying entities beyond necessity." Naturally, here the decision cannot be as sharp or final as it is in connection with meaningfulness. The empiricist will admit that it is conceivable that sufficient evidence may yet emerge in favor of a dualistic conception. But he will also be very reluctant in attributing to the alleged facts of extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, mediumism, etc., any considerable weight as evidence for dualism. It is quite possible that these "facts" (if indeed they are not the result of self-deception, experimental or statistical error, or outright fraud) merely indicate new and strange forms of *physical* causality which may, however, still be quite compatible with psychophysiological monism. Nevertheless a cautious attitude of open-minded research in this area is the only one that an empiricist can afford to recommend.

Educationally, perhaps, somewhat more significant are the implications of mind-body monism for the problem of free will. This old puzzle rests on some rather simple conceptual confusions. There is the idea that we could not be held responsible for our actions if these are the strict causal consequences of antecedent conditions, i.e., of "nature" and "nurture" (hereditary constitution and all environmental influences up to the moment of action). Moreover,

there is the immediate experience of freely choosing between alternative possibilities of action; this leads to the notion that the future is as yet undetermined but, with the aid of our own spontaneous decisions, may become determined. "Spontaneity" here is, then, often interpreted as causal independence from antecedent conditions. Just as in the case of mind-body dualism, we may say that this interpretation is not supported by any scientific evidence whatever. That the freedom we experience in choosing between alternatives should be *freedom from causes* is not only extremely implausible; this sort of freedom would even be indistinguishable from absolute chance—a conclusion which, far from rendering responsibility possible, would in fact altogether exclude it. Only the deterministic view provides an adequate basis for an interpretation of moral responsibility. That is to say, only if we are—with our character and personality as it is constituted at a given moment of our life—the doers of our deeds, can we be held accountable.

The naturalistic view here proposed considers human beings with their drives and interests, reflections and deliberations, purposes and ideals, preferences, choices and actions, as links in the causal chains of the processes of the universe. Causal determination on the level of the biopsychological organization of the human organism is, of course, very different from the push-pull type that philosophers traditionally have in mind when they identify causation with *mechanical* determinism. Moreover, by confusing determinism (of any type) with compulsion, they arrive at the conclusion that a strictly causal interpretation of human behavior implies the doctrine of fatalism. But the correlative confusion of freedom with absolute chance will not extricate them from this undesirable doctrine. The only way out, very clearly recognized by empiricist thinkers long ago, is to recognize freedom as absence of compulsion and to interpret causal necessity essentially in terms of lawfulness and predictability. Free will in this sense "presupposes causal determination and is inconceivable without it."<sup>4</sup>

For education, these clarifications imply that the specter of fatalistic helplessness rests on misconceptions which are easily removed. As long as education promotes the formation of intelligence and character in a manner which allows for free learning, rational

4. Cf. the article by R. E. Hobart in *Mind*, XLIII (January, 1934), 1-27.

choices, and critical reflection, human beings so educated will have an excellent opportunity for being masters of their own activities and achievements. From the lessons of their experience they will learn how to adjust themselves for future exigencies. The sentiments of regret or remorse can be instrumental in this regard only if they do not hopelessly fix the individual's attention exclusively upon his past deeds (this can only result in stupefaction and paralysis), but rather if they mobilize the resolution to act differently on future similar occasions. Docility, the capacity of modifying both one's beliefs and one's attitudes under the influence of experience, is of the very essence of freedom.

The special forms that educational encouragement or discouragement should take in order to be most effective is a question for psychologists, not for philosophers, to answer. In general, what is known about the function of rewards and punishments (positive and negative reinforcements) seems to indicate clearly that the use of painful or frustrating measures of negative reinforcement so frequently results in undesirable by-products that modern education is surely right in accentuating the constructive techniques of encouragement.

#### THEORY OF VALUES AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY

A discussion of the free-will problem remains essentially incomplete without consideration of issues in ethical theory. In essence we have adopted Spinoza's definition according to which a being is called free to the extent to which its actions are determined by its nature; and is unfree to the extent that these actions are imposed upon it by factors or forces from without. While there may be some uncertainty regarding the precise delimitation of the "nature" of a human being, and although the terminology will seem somewhat obsolete to modern psychologists, the basic idea of these definitions is eminently sound. "Free from what?" and "Free for what?" are *the* questions that must be raised and properly answered if we are to eliminate the gratuitous perplexities from the old puzzle. It is especially in connection with the second question that issues of valuation invariably arise. Again, in rather old-fashioned terms, we may say that the educational process develops or molds whatever original or "first" nature there is in a human being by

transforming it into a "second" nature. More modern terms—aside from the perhaps too narrowly doctrinaire "conditioning"—would be "character training" or "personality development." If, as adults and civilized persons, we feel that we *freely* and *willingly* help our neighbors, abstain from robbing banks, keep our promises, pay our debts (even our taxes), then perhaps some of this is due to our "second nature," acquired through the process of "socialization" and education. But the "second nature" of the ruthless criminal may equally be acquired through the environmental influences that have impinged upon him throughout the course of his development.

What is the "true" human nature that education *ought* to help shape in every human being? These are clearly value questions, moral problems. The core of human nature that is to express itself in our actions—if these actions are to be called free—may be differently conceived and has, indeed, been differently delimited by thinkers who subscribe to different moral ideals. In the Platonic and in the Christian tradition, for example, *reason* has been advocated as the core of human nature—reason in the sense in which it is contrasted with the passions. The puritan outlook is merely one of many historical instances of this sort of ethical evaluation. Cavaliers, however, might counter that the core of human nature lies in the passions and that man is free only if not constrained by reason. Lest it be thought that this position has never been seriously held, I quote a sentence from Hume who, even if not exactly a Cavalier, was rather a utilitarian: "Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions. . . ." I trust this quotation detached from its context will not prejudice some of my readers too strongly against Hume and his moral philosophy. It is used here merely in order forcefully to remind ourselves that the aims of education presuppose some ideals of human nature and that such ideals are supported by value judgments.

The central issue for any theory of values is clearly: Can value judgments be justified as true (or false), and if so, what is the basis and what is the method of such justifications? It can scarcely be overlooked that practically all of our activities occur in the context of decisions in which we judge some actions good, others bad; or, more frequently, where we make our choices in the light of some rank order of preferences ("better" or "worse" used as

asymmetrical and transitive relations wherever we deal with commensurable values). The perennial issues in value theory are then expressed by the following queries: Are value judgments propositions in the same sense in which empirical statements are propositions? Does it make sense (and, if so, the *same* sense) to ascribe truth or falsity to value judgments as it does to empirical propositions? In what sense, if any, can value judgments be said to be objectively true, i.e., to have intersubjective validity?

Logical empiricists are generally agreed to draw a sharp distinction between the *study* of evaluations and the *making* of evaluations. We may study evaluations as they occur in their social and cultural contexts; we may try to account for them psychologically, socioeconomically, etc. The study of evaluations itself is, of course, controlled by the criteria of scientific inquiry which in this context are presupposed and not under scrutiny. Similarly, there are many cases in which a value judgment simply amounts to applying value standards which are not called into question on such occasions. These value standards (norms or criteria) are tacitly presupposed; they are taken unquestioningly for granted. But what is accepted unquestioningly need not be considered unquestionable. Even the criteria of scientific inquiry have been subject to revision, in the long history of scientific thought. This could be formulated by saying that the very definition of "science" has undergone some changes. In most of the typical value questions of ordinary life, both the criteria of empirical truth and the standards of value form the unquestioned frame within which removal of doubt or the settlement of disputes is undertaken. For example, *ceteris paribus*, it is better to eat than to starve, better to treat a child kindly than cruelly, better to have knowledge than to be ignorant. The logic of the reasoning which we use when we justify our preferences is simply to show that the presupposed value criteria apply to the special case. That is to say, empirical judgments decide about the presence or absence of certain properties or relations. Perplexity arises only when the criteria of valuation themselves are called into question. This obviously happens when we realize that there may be no intersubjectivity: "One man's meat is another man's poison"; "*de gustibus non est disputandum*," etc.

There is a good deal of tolerance nowadays in matters of culinary

and even of artistic taste—a “live and let live” attitude is almost essential for a cultivated person. But exactly the opposite holds in matters of fundamental moral values. We are most emphatically intolerant not only toward embezzlers, thieves, rapists, sadists, despots, kidnappers, traitors, and murderers but we also disapprove quite strongly of greed, sycophancy, mendacity, hypocrisy, psychological hostility, sexual aberrations, and unfairness of various sorts, even when these attitudes remain entirely “within the law.” For this reason I think it is not only unfortunate but definitely misleading if some radical positivists have tried to assimilate moral judgments to judgments of taste. Not only do we hold our moral judgments with a much greater degree of seriousness—this would indeed be a mere matter of degree—but the very meaning of moral norms is misconstrued if it is analogized to that of aesthetic norms. There is nothing in the *meaning* of aesthetic norms that demands universality or intersubjectivity. But whenever we raise the question of morality, of the *rightness* of acts, we (implicitly, at least) assume that the moral principles hold equally stringently for everybody concerned, in no matter what conflict of interests.

In aesthetic questions we may face a divergence of attitudes, and we may well let it go at that, provided this divergence is morally inconsequential. In a conflict of interests which is to be morally adjudicated, the first condition to be fulfilled is that—with due allowance for *morally relevant* differences between the persons in the dispute—these persons are in any case *basically* equal to one another as far as the moral rules are concerned. In this respect *moral* value judgments differ quite fundamentally from all other types of value judgments. In aesthetic judgments we are concerned with the structure and the content of works of art. If we criticize people for their bad taste, such criticisms are not in themselves aesthetic judgments, in the sense in which a judgment which condemns, e.g., a painting as “vulgar” or “worthless,” formulates an aesthetic valuation. But in making moral judgments we judge each other.

The point of the foregoing remarks is simply this: If we are not to distort beyond recognition the ordinary and central meaning of such words as “moral,” “ethical,” and their uses in such compounds as “morally good,” “ethically right,” and “moral obligation,” we must retain in the definition of them certain characteristics that



distinguish *moral* norms from norms in other fields, such as the norms of logic, arithmetic, the norms of wholesome nutrition, of hygiene, of etiquette, of good manners, or of correct spelling. It is true, once norms of any kind have become absorbed and deeply entrenched in our habits, they will be experienced as possessing value—they have become habitual values. But, if the *jeu de mots* be permitted, there is a difference between habitual values and valuable habits.

Norms which are embodied in habits, like any rule which we have made to govern our behavior, have a motivative function, expressed by "ought" and "should" in common language. Compliance with the rule is apt to produce self-approval—to the point of guilt feelings, even if the rule violated was merely one of diet, cleanliness, or other *nonmoral* rules. Moral rules are distinguished from other rules in that they are designed to enjoin consideration for the interests of our fellow men by some principle of justice, impartiality, or equity. This would seem to be the minimum condition for an adequate explication of the core-meaning of "moral rule." Considerateness in the sense prescribed by "Do no harm to others!" is implied but is, by itself, not sufficient. Whether, in addition to a principle of justice, a principle of kindness (going beyond equity) is required in order to explicate the common meaning of "morally good" may be questioned. Even more uncertain is the inclusion of some principle of perfection or self-realization.

I trust these remarks will not be misunderstood. I am here not concerned with advocating a code of ethics. Explication, not exhortation, is my business as analytic philosopher. I have tried to show that the minimum meaning of ethical terms and imperatives in ordinary usage is such as to preclude any simple and complete analogy with aesthetic terms or aesthetic norms. But having emphatically pointed this out, I must hasten to add that in other respects there is, even in the field of moral principles, a good deal of leeway for persuasive definitions. As many critics of the Kantian categorical imperative correctly realized, an abstract principle of justice or impartiality—even if it sets off moral rules from nonmoral ones—is by itself extremely barren ("formal"—though not purely formal, in the sense in which logical truths are devoid of empirical content). Depending on what other rules are added to the principle

of justice, different ethical systems result. These ethical systems may be regarded as genuine alternatives in the same sense in which Euclidean and various non-Euclidean geometries are alternatives and incompatible with one another. It is for this reason that moral value judgments cannot be analyzed into purely empirical propositions. Ever so often, the question, "Is this really right?" (i.e., "Is this really what we ought to do?") arises, not from (the ubiquitous and often formidable) difficulties of foreseeing the consequences of our acts, or seeing through the factual complexities of means-ends relations, but rather in the form of uncertainties regarding the moral norms themselves.

These difficulties are in principle capable of resolution by empirical inquiry. To be sure, one cannot expect any set of moral norms, no matter how completely and carefully specified, to adjudicate every concrete moral issue. There are situations in which our obligations may be so precisely counterbalanced by other obligations that a reasoned resolution may be impossible. There are other situations in which every conceivable action is so fraught with evil that we are unable to decide which sort of action would bring about the least evil. That ethics is not, and cannot be, an "exact science" with decision procedures for all possible issues has certainly been admitted by many a thinker, ancient or modern. But what has perhaps not been sufficiently realized is that, even within the frame of an ethics of justice, fairness, benevolence, and self-perfection there are alternative ways of applying these key terms to the empirical characteristics of conduct, attitudes, or character-traits which are the object of evaluation. What appears as just and equitable in one system of valuations may not appear so in another system. Every one of the key terms of moral valuation is open to persuasive definition or redefinition. To put it differently: The "prima facie obligations" which so many moralists accept as unquestionably basic in the moral universe of discourse allow for different sets of priority rules (rules of precedence). Only if we could justify a universally acceptable set of priority rules would we have a unique system of ethics which would resemble in intersubjectivity the criteria of scientific method.

Again, it should be noted that these reflections are not based upon the type of evidence which anthropologists and sociologists,

especially of previous generations, were so fond of citing in behalf of their doctrine of ethical relativity. In accordance with the modified position of present-day cultural anthropology, I would certainly insist upon the distinction of *mores*, i.e., folkways, with their taboos and injunctions, and *morality*, i.e., the more fundamental ethical norms in whose light the mores may be appraised in regard to their justifiability. With these modern social scientists I believe that there is an important and fairly large common core of basic moral principles, characteristic of most civilizations and relatively unchanged throughout history. This common core arose fairly inevitably out of some of the most pervasive aspects of the human situation. In a context of interdependence and co-operation, in the pursuit of common goals, we quite naturally make demands upon each other. If these demands are not respected, we find in "public opinion" or in the "consensus of the majority" an authority which, relative to the individual, plays psychologically a role similar to that of a (more or less) impartial parental censor or judge.

Education with its atmosphere of moral approvals and disapprovals develops in the individual that internal "still voice," the conscience, which, though corruptible, is nevertheless immensely powerful in its normal functions of a restraining and/or inciting force. Whether we conceive conscience thus as a result of moral conditioning or psychoanalytically as the introjected parental authority (the super-ego) is perhaps merely a matter of terminology. Once this capacity for internal self-appraisal is developed, it assumes occasionally sufficient independence or emancipation from the moral precepts with which it was originally imbued. It then may break through even majority-endorsed standards and come to embrace new principles of morality, in the light of which the old ones may not only be abandoned but morally condemned. "Reverence for life," the outlook of the radical pacifist, or (on the opposite side) Nietzsche's ethics of the superman may be regarded as such "transvaluations" of previous values.

The normal process through which value-attachments come about may be explained in terms of Gordon Allport's principle of functional autonomy: What at first is valuable instrumentally (extrinsically) may, through use, become terminally (intrinsically)

valuable. Justice, kindness, and perfection regarded in this way are generally accepted moral values, precisely because they are the results of adjustments of attitudes which are practically bound to emerge in the context of social interaction. The moral reformer who emancipates himself from tradition-endorsed standards can justify his "heresy" only by reference to the probable results that the adoption of his moral code will yield for mankind as a whole.

Logical empiricist moral philosophy may be regarded as relativistic in that it recognizes moral values (or, for that matter, values of any kind) as dependent on human needs and interests. A "categorical" imperative, i.e., an unconditional moral command, appears to be ineffective in that without appeal to human interests it would never come to be adopted; and it appears arbitrary in that the acceptance of a moral code can be justified only with reference to the goals of the group to which the code is to apply. But in view of the basic and practically permanent aspects of the human situation this "relativism" is not to be confused with a moral anarchism, skepticism, or nihilism. A certain frame of moral principles reflects in its stability the constancy of the human-social situation. It is primarily *within* that frame that we find moral disagreements—often poignant, painful, even tragic—which cannot be settled by appeal to logic or empirical evidence. Value attachments may indeed be so incompatible with one another that the only techniques available for the settlement of disagreements will have to be noncognitive.

Persuasion, re-education, and psychotherapy are examples of such techniques in which emotive meanings or the motivative function of language play an essential role. But there are also such practical techniques as compromise, the great device of business and of politics; segregation, i.e., the separation, as in divorce, of the incompatible parties—unfortunately usually not practicable in international conflicts; or "higher synthesis," i.e., the procedure which achieves agreement by abandoning lower for higher values, as in the case of the formation of an international state in which each of the participant nations sacrifices some of its sovereignty in favor of the unity of the new organization. While history seems to indicate that coercion and violence are inevitable as last resorts, this pessimistic view may yet be recognized as a hasty generalization.

## *Ends and Means of Education*

### SOCIAL GOALS OF EDUCATION

The scientific outlook in philosophy proposed by the logical empiricists has no room for "absolute values"—if this phrase is understood to mean values that could be demonstrated or otherwise justified independently of any reference to human needs, interests, and ideals as they naturally arise in the bio-psycho-socioeconomic-historical matrix of civilization. Our age of scientific enlightenment requires a new form of emotional and moral maturity: We shall have to learn to *live* with our knowledge about ourselves: to combine scientific, penetrating insight with serious moral and social commitments; to acquire the ability to use our knowledge wisely and humanely. There are many who find no difficulty in this. But there are others who do not feel secure except within the frame of dogmatic creeds. And there are still others who, having lost their religious or their social-political absolute faiths, feel completely at sea and resort to a "philosophy" of nausea, despair, and spasmodic irrational action. Such a philosophy is exemplified in some of the German and French forms of existentialism. It is not fully clear at present to what extent the inherited constitution and the life-experiences of an individual are responsible for these attitudes or character traits, or for dispositions inclining them in these directions. Fuller insight into the factors that determine a person's outlook upon life will ultimately help in the elimination of infantile fixations and in the prevention of regressions to less mature levels of development.

The scientific humanist does not engage in the search for absolutes, the quest for the indubitable; but he is nevertheless able firmly to hold to the truths which experience has sufficiently substantiated and to the attitudes which experience has sufficiently endorsed. He is not disturbed by the impossibility of demonstrating that his beliefs and attitudes are necessarily the only ones that are "absolutely valid." The scientific humanist thinks and acts within a frame of standards and criteria which he feels has sufficient *practical* justification not to be called into question on every occasion of doubt. He attempts to resolve doubts first *within* this frame, but he is entirely willing to reconsider the frame itself and,

if necessary, to replace it by a new one. Psychological studies have made it fairly clear that the tolerance of uncertainty, of doubt, of dilemmatic quandaries is more marked in what also, on other grounds, would be recognized as the more "grown-up," the maturer kind of personality. Emotional immaturity often expresses itself in a dogmatic attitude.

The scientific humanist refuses to anchor his beliefs and valuations in the unknown or the unknowable. He recognizes the illusions engendered by wishful thinking that underlie the other-worldly (transcendent) beliefs of those who cling to the orthodoxies of theology or metaphysics. He repudiates as worthless sophistry the medieval and latter-day theological or metaphysical "demonstrations." Logical analysis shows clearly the reckless and irresponsible extensions of the usage of ordinary language when applied to the "absolutes" of transcendent speculation. The humanist also suspects that the much-vaunted "humility" of those who submit to an absolute authority (be it religious or political), in some cases, amounts to a camouflaged conceit or arrogance. The claims of "higher" knowledge or of special power or privilege are only too transparently self-aggrandizing delusions. Equally obvious in a psychological way are the techniques of promising rewards or threatening with punishment in the hereafter. The humanist can look only with contempt at such bribery or blackmail. Mankind would be in a deplorable position if it depended on such crude devices for the enforcement of its moral principles.

In our age of scientific enlightenment, human knowledge and human love and sympathy are the only firm foundations on which moral conduct can be built. The message of brotherly love combined with the message of justice, the ethical core of many of the world's religions (but without the theological superstructure), is, of course, wholeheartedly accepted by present-day naturalistic humanists. It is an elementary fact, fully substantiated by modern psychology, that the constructive tendencies of love and sympathy are apt to be inhibited or to be turned into aggression, cruelty, and violence through frustration or deprivation. Whatever original, aggressive impulses there are in the behavior of the normal child can be sublimated and thus guided into channels of socially constructive action by proper educational guidance. It is a common human experience that our actions are apt to be socially most valuable if they

spring from deeply benevolent impulses. It is equally clear that we achieve peace of mind under these same conditions.

Since persons who are strongly dissatisfied with themselves are rarely able to extend good will to their fellow men, the educational task is clearly to guide them toward conduct which will yield a large measure of self-approval. The enormous amount of hostility and aggression (friction, tension, wilful misunderstanding, non-cooperation, slander, defamation, envy, and jealousy) present in human relations could be considerably reduced by appropriate educational measures. But the educational front is only a segment of the total front on which we must advance toward a more humane form of existence. Nevertheless, the educational effort is crucial inasmuch as progress on other fronts, such as the social, political, economic, legal, or hygienic, usually requires a readiness for new ideas and general open-mindedness which a scientific and humanistic education is more likely to produce than are other types of education.

There is little else that I can say along these fundamental lines regarding educational ideals. Recognizing the actualities and the potentialities of human nature and society, logical empiricists, like most other liberal thinkers, very gladly give three cheers for democracy; or is it only 2.85 cheers? (The minor qualification merely serves as a reminder that even the democratic form of government is not completely free from such more-or-less incidental disadvantages as the dangers of bureaucracy, the slowness of deliberation and decision, the spoils system, the corruptibility of entrenched parties, and so on.) Democracy as a form of government and as a way of life is, in any case, tremendously superior to all other forms—i.e., the aristocratic, the tyrannical, the feudalistic, the theocratic, the technocratic, and the fascistic or the communistic totalitarianism.

Scientific humanism acknowledges the supreme merits of self-government by means of universal suffrage; of a government that is responsible as well as responsive to the interests of all concerned, and in which those concerned participate intelligently and responsibly in the shaping of their own welfare. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in comparison with this basic ideal, such issues as those of economic socialism *vs.* capitalism—in any of their various forms and modifications—are subsidiary, despite their vital practical importance. Some scientific humanists consider a *democratic* socialism at least as a live option, if not actually as the most hopeful solution

for our pressing problems. If the ideals of social justice held by capitalism (private ownership of the means of production; free enterprise, etc.) and socialism (public ownership; governmentally regulated economy) are identical, then, of course, no *moral* argument could decide between them. The issue would then be merely one of a purely factual consideration of the comparative expediency of the two systems. But it is likely that there are moral differences, because it seems that social justice is differently conceived by the two points of view.

Like many other reflective thinkers who are able to keep their heads above the turmoil of the moment, humanists not only "dream" of but also actively work for the ideal of the community of *all* men, a world state. Difficult as the attainment of this ideal must seem at present, we must not be discouraged in its pursuit. Education may well take this up as a challenge and help the young (as well as the adult) in exploring the ways and means of a more equitable sharing of the resources of our planet and of establishing a world government that will make war at last obsolete. War, the worst, or in any case very nearly the worst, of all evils, is basically anachronistic, stupid, and ineffective as a means for settling conflicts of interest. In a time when there can be no victor, when the powers of destruction are more horrible than ever, when large masses of the populations are in mortal danger, and when the consequences of war in terms of disease, poverty, and universal misery are incalculably great, general education surely can help in preparing the minds for peaceful alternative procedures.

I am painfully aware that the philosopher, as purely reflective thinker, can contribute scarcely more than these unoriginal and rather abstract suggestions. The real constructive work will require the collaboration of the experts of many fields. But in this collaboration, the philosopher-humanist can fulfil a useful critical role. He can watch the thinking in this domain (just as elsewhere) and remind others as well as himself of the norms of valid reasoning.

#### IDEALS OF INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL EDUCATION FOR OUR TIMES

The preceding discussions have already amply indicated what sort of contribution education can and should provide in guiding intellectual and moral growth. A brief and more systematic summary



will be useful at this point. The classical Aristotelean conception of man as the rational animal—all too frequent manifestations of irrationality to the contrary notwithstanding—may still be a good beginning. But it is indispensable to explicate fully and precisely what this “rationality” to be fostered in education signifies in sum and substance.

“Rationality” connotes a variety of virtues of thought and conduct. The following list may not be complete, but it will be sufficiently suggestive:

1. *Clarity of Thought.* This implies the meaningful use of language, the ability to distinguish sense from nonsense and thus avoid gratuitous perplexities over unanswerable questions. It also implies a sufficient degree of specification of definition of meanings so that communication may be as unambiguous and concepts be as precise as the task on hand requires.
2. *Consistency and Conclusiveness of Reasoning.* This is “logicality” in the narrower sense of absence of self-contradictions and of analytically necessary implications between the premises and the conclusions of valid deductive arguments. Conformity with the principles of formal logic insures fulfilment of this requirement.
3. *Factual Adequacy and Reliability of Knowledge Claims.* These are the virtues of thought usually summarized under the caption “truth.” Truth may be semantically defined as correspondence of statements and facts. But this rather formal definition is insufficient if a characterization of the confirmation of truth is to be given. Wherever a complete confrontation of statement and corresponding fact is impossible, principles of inductive probability for the partial and/or indirect verification of generalizations, hypotheses, or theories have to be respected. Generally the degree of confirmation (or of the reliability) of factual statements is to be maximized in accordance with the rules of inductive logic. Wherever the evidence is too weak, belief should be withheld until further evidence turns up to decide the issue on hand.
4. *Objectivity of Knowledge Claims.* This comprises intersubjectivity and impartiality in cognitive issues. Objectivity in this sense involves not only absence of personal or cultural bias but also the requirement that knowledge claims be testable by any person sufficiently equipped with intelligence and the instrumental devices for performing the test of the knowledge-claim in question.
5. *Rationality of Purposive Behavior.* Rationality in this sense may be explicated as the main feature of behavior which achieves its purposes by a proper choice of means. Behavior which defeats its own purposes is generally considered “irrational.” This criterion of rationality is closely related to a similar but more specialized concept in economics. Generally speaking, we have here a conception of rationality which amounts to a minimum-maximum (“minimax”) principle according to which a maximum of positive value is to be produced by means which involve a minimum of negative value.

6. *Moral Rationality*. This comprises: (a) Adherence to principles of justice, equity, or impartiality. If there is no morally relevant or sufficient reason to allow greater privileges to one person than another, they are to be *equal* before the moral law. This exclusion of special privilege rules out the sort of arbitrary arrogation of rights on the part of individuals who are unwilling to accept the correlative obligations. (b) The abstention from coercion and violence in the settlement of conflicts of interest. "Appeal to reason" in the sense of all the connotations of "rationality" thus far enumerated (from 1 through 6a) is deemed as the only morally acceptable method for the adjudication of disputes.

In addition to these ideals of rational thought and conduct, education should foster the development of constructive and benevolent attitudes. It should help every individual in maintaining a sufficiently high level of aspiration for self-perfection. But it should also be mindful of the important psychological fact that too great a discrepancy between the ideal-as-envisaged and one's achievements-as-experienced-by-one's-self is apt to produce neurotic maladjustments. Severe self-criticism, often engendered by harshly disapproving parents, teachers, or "father (mother) figures" in later life periods, may result in depression, abulia, anxiety, or similar symptoms—the typical troubles of many an adolescent or adult perfectionist.

#### SOME COMMENTS ON WAYS AND MEANS OF EDUCATION

The main educational implication of the philosophical outlook of logical empiricism might be formulated in the slogan: "Scientific enlightenment versus tradition-bound obscurantism." The modern scientific attitude has much of the Promethean ardor: The torch of enlightenment is to illuminate the dark corners of our minds; and it is to liberate us from the bondage of rigid customs of thought and action.

There is much in *progressive education* that appears sound and hopeful. The urgent problems of human existence in our age make a *forward-looking* emphasis imperative. We have to fix our sights on goals to be attained rather than on past achievements, if we are to appraise the ways and means of education. In a world which utilizes to an ever increasing degree scientific knowledge for the improvement of life, a large part of education should be devoted to the acquisition of the scientific attitude and of an understanding of the problems and the results of the sciences, natural and social,

pure as well as applied. This can be successful only if we include in the study of the sciences, or otherwise in the curriculum of studies throughout elementary, secondary, and higher education, appropriate measures of the history and the philosophy of science. Mere facts, figures, and formulas, important though their mastery is, will by themselves never suffice for an adequate apprehension of the scientific outlook.

It is my impression that the teaching of science could be made ever so much more attractive, enjoyable, and generally profitable by the sort of approach that is more frequently practiced in the arts and the humanities. The dull and dry-as-dust science courses can be replaced by an exciting intellectual adventure if the students are permitted to see the scientific enterprise in broader perspective. Preoccupation with the purely practical values of applied science has overshadowed the intellectual and cultural values of the quest for knowledge. Science in this regard is perfectly on a par with the arts. It is poor science-teaching that is responsible for the frequent dislike or even fear of the "difficult" and "technical" subject matter. Mathematics and the natural and the social sciences can be taught and studied in a manner that highlights the great achievements in these fields by concentration on the methods of the discovery and validation of knowledge. Students should be aided and encouraged to *rediscover* for themselves some of the simpler and basic facts of modern science; they should be guided toward a fuller understanding of the techniques of observation, measurement, experimentation, statistical analysis, definition, explanation, and interpretation. Naturally, methodology alone will not suffice. Intellectual training that does not fill the mind with relevant subject matter is bound to leave it sterile. "Concepts without content are empty, and [those] without form are blind."

It should be clear by now that I am pleading for a golden-mean solution of the issue between progressive and classical education. In an age whose knowledge, culture, and civilization are of an unprecedented complexity, even the minimum amount of knowledge and information that needs to be absorbed for the sake of responsible citizenship is so extensive that "learning by doing," while very desirable as far it will go, cannot possibly go far enough. A certain amount of systematic and sustained effort is unavoidable.

The training in the sciences and in the scientific attitude should, of course, be combined with studies in history, literature, and the arts. Man does not live by technologically enhanced creature-comforts alone. His very interest in pure knowledge for its own sake is of the same sort—partly aesthetic in character—as his need for artistic creation and/or appreciation. Unfortunately, a very common misconception views science and the humanities as somehow incompatible with one another. This misconception arises out of confusions which can be removed by a little philosophical analysis.

Science, by way of a reductive fallacy, is still regarded as essentially materialistic, and thus as incapable of accounting for the “higher things of life.” And these “higher things” are still regarded as essentially beyond the reach of scientific inquiry because of theological or metaphysical preconceptions which, owing to cultural lag, still survive in much of the thinking and even the language of our day. From the point of view of a scientific humanism, the aesthetic values, the values of the moral life and the values of love and friendship, are not in the least endangered by any explanation of their origins or functions that psychology and the social sciences may contribute. Only those who insist that the higher values of life are sustained by supernatural powers will find the scientific outlook severely sobering or disappointing. But once the other-worldly and obscurantist conceit is abandoned, our lives will be enriched by a better understanding of ourselves.

To be sure, it is only part of wisdom if, *while* experiencing, e.g., the ecstasies of love, we refrain from reflecting on these experiences from the point of view of endocrinology or that of psychoanalysis. But it is equally clear that knowledge in these fields can be extremely helpful if we wish to remove pathological impediments. While listening with rapture to great music it is unwise to remind ourselves of the physics of sound production, e.g., to think of the scraping of horse hairs against cat guts in the violins. Nevertheless, the sciences of acoustics and electronics have provided tremendously enlarged opportunities for the enjoyment of music, as through the radio and the phonograph. These remarks are simply to point to the elementary wisdom of combining activities or attitudes simultaneously only if they do not interfere with one another. It is a neurotic aberration of the intellectualistic temper of our time, if the spotlight

of rational analysis is applied to everything *all* the time. Gentle educational guidance can help in the more proper and fruitful use of the powers of reason.

A little practical wisdom will go a long way also in resolving the issue between general and specialized education. Education toward responsible citizenship in the modern world must include broad and none-too-superficial knowledge in many fields. Elementary and secondary education can contribute a great deal in this regard, even if not supplemented by higher education. Around this central core of general studies may then be grouped the individually different and more specialized vocational training.

Individual differences in intelligence and in special aptitudes provide a great range of educational possibilities. There is no doubt that scientific, cultural, and social progress demands that the best creative or critical minds be recognized early and be given special opportunities in accelerated forms of education. It is a poor interpretation of the idea of democracy if it is made to justify a thoughtless egalitarianism. The formation of an intellectual élite is not only inevitable, it is desirable for welfare of society as a whole.

An often voiced complaint concerns the dangers of overspecialization in our age of the extreme differentiation and division of labor. Education, in clustering the specialized studies around an emphasized common nucleus of basic subjects, can counteract these dangers. Here some of the philosophical results of logical empiricism, especially in its ideas concerning the *unity of science*, are highly relevant. From this point of view, the traditional departmental divisions are to be regarded as practical conveniences rather than as fundamental lines of cleavage. The unity-of-science movement, which has been an important expression of the logical-empiricist outlook ever since its inception, has stressed the essential unity of both method and subject matter of the sciences. The natural and the social sciences differ in their special techniques, but the methods of validation are essentially the same. They delimit the range and the level of their analyses differently, but there are good reasons to assume that these (superficially very striking) differences amount only to fruitful divisions of one unitary subject matter in its various aspects and levels of organization. Appropriate teaching of the sciences will enable the students in various stages of their schooling to cross departmental

lines and to become increasingly aware of the *common* features of method in the various fields.

Related to the preceding point is the even more significant contribution the logical-empiricist point of view can make in the education toward clearer thinking. The elements of a philosophy of language can furnish important suggestions for the teaching and learning procedures on all levels. The process of communication is almost universally and constantly impeded by the obscurities, ambiguities, and vaguenesses of language. Thought itself depends so largely (if not entirely) on the modes of linguistic representation and symbolization that confusion and perplexity can be avoided only by greater attention to the rules of meaningful discourse. Logic in the traditional sense, while directly concerned with the correctness of reasoning, must be supplemented (as it has been, however insufficiently, by "rhetoric" throughout the ages) by the new disciplines of semeiology, comprising syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. These formidable technical terms need not discourage the educator. There is much that is vital and yet quite simple and commonsensical in these disciplines. The ancient art of Socratic questioning in the pursuit of meaning can be brought up to date; it can be implemented with the tools of modern semeiology. Even on very elementary levels one can try to achieve a high degree of clarity. Techniques of definition can be utilized quite implicitly and informally with children and with increasing explicit awareness for higher stages of maturity. On the college level there are, in addition to the logic courses offered in philosophy departments, many other types of courses, including Freshman English, communication, speech, etc., in which the influence of the new semeiotic disciplines is quite noticeable.

Training in the analysis of the functions of language is, educationally, extremely valuable in that it provides the tools for recognizing propaganda, for persuasive definitions, and, more fundamentally, for an understanding of the distinction between cognition and valuation. It helps in spotting disguised tautologies and disclosing their factual emptiness. And last, but not least, it makes possible the distinction between information on the one hand and exhortation, edification, etc., on the other, which scientific enlightenment must insist upon if it is to dislodge the confusions with which tender-minded, wishful, and prescientific thinking abound.

Mankind has embarked on the adventure of civilization in which scientific knowledge plays the major guiding role. It is unlikely that we shall ever wish to return to a more primitive way of life. A sustained educational effort, for many generations to come, is urgently needed in order to adapt humanity to the new ways of thinking necessitated by this age of science. A philosophy which does full justice to the scientific outlook can be a powerful ally in our endeavors toward a more mature and more fully integrated life.

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## CHAPTER X

### *An Ontological Philosophy of Education\**

JAMES K. FEIBLEMAN

There are some topics so seldom treated by philosophers that a professional can very nearly make his reputation outside his own field merely by dabbling in any one of them. Among these topics are religion, jurisprudence, and education. Now the corollary happens too often that the philosopher with a deserved reputation among professionals is seldom taken seriously when he turns to the philosophy of education. So we have the unfortunate situation of educational philosophers with nothing to say and philosophers in education to whom no one listens. This situation must not be allowed to discourage the truly earnest workers. It is possible to make the greatest of claims in theory and still to hope that, because the methods of translation into concrete applications have been indicated, if there is any residue of value lurking here, something will be done in practice.

From one point of view, education proper is the acquisition of existing knowledge on the principles of rhetoric. Rhetoric is the theory of communication. The theory of education is a branch of pure rhetoric; the practice of education, applied rhetoric. Rhetoric, like most secondary theories with a field of application, is suspended in a sort of limbo between metaphysics, on the one hand, and practical states of affairs, on the other. It must have the character of a deduction from ontology and epistemology, and it must be susceptible of serving as the conclusion to a series of inductions from actual practice. Thus continual checking in both directions is indicated; a difficult task, when we take into consideration that we are dealing with three areas in which changes are taking place.

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The aim of the following pages is to set the problem, present the difficulties, and then offer a constructive hypothesis, ending with some suggestions as to how such a proposal could be put into practice.

### *Theory of Unlearning*

For most young persons, education does not start at the beginning but in the middle. No matter at what stage formal learning is initiated, a great deal of damage has already been done. For we shall usually find that we are dealing, not with ignorance, but with false knowledge, with accepted errors and half-truths. If we take into consideration the usual procedures of education, we have to face additional difficulties instead of enlightenment. For education often reassures the ignorant by intensifying the ignorance. The less we know, the more certainly do we impart it to others. The result is not knowledge but absolute beliefs; the frozen procedures of side-tracked attention lead to the squirrel cages of deflected inquiry. In a small way, we learn to play games; in a large way, we adopt ritual cycles, e.g., religions without the concept of progress.

Most people, in other words, young as well as old, do not approach formal education with inviting ignorance but with their ignorance and its limited virtues already lost to them. Very young children ask the fundamental questions which suggest a purity of ignorance. They want to know such things as who is God and how far space extends. We hypocrites have answers ready for them. And so they lose their ignorance; grow up in a bewildering maze of formulas which are intended to satisfy them; marry; and enter the rat race of paying taxes, running for streetcars, reading the funny papers, getting to the office, shaving, and the myriad other ways of conforming to the set practices of their society. This is not the stage of wisdom and knowledge; it is merely the stage of ignorance lost.

Due to the marvels of modern universal education, most people have been trained for a life to be led in this limbo. They eke out their anomalous existence somewhere between the abstract and the concrete. Common experience is not a base line, it is a compromise, inherited in average form; the shreds of ancient knowledge and wisdom worn away at the edges by a constant rubbing against

mediocrity. For intensification has come in two directions: The artists have genuine experience of concrete objects, the product of high concentration for many years; and the mathematicians and empirical scientists know what it means to move among abstractions. But the education most people receive prepares them for neither.

Historically speaking, the peasants were accustomed to dealing with concrete particulars, and the scholars with abstractions. This took place at a fairly common-sense level, however, in both cases. The extraordinary progress in mathematics and in empirical science, if not in all of the arts, has penetrated to deeper levels of analysis and has left the bulk of the population far behind. For them we have invented a new kind of thing: mass half-education. We have produced an exceedingly large population which has lost contact with the concrete particulars of the illiterate but which has not succeeded in gaining a familiarity with the abstractions afforded by the erudite.

Mass man today never reaches up to the logical structures of mathematics, physics, and metaphysics, while he has lost the ability to get down to the intensive cultivation of the active, concrete world. He has, in other words, forsaken the cultivation of his feelings without having the reward of an increased cultivation of his reason. He lives in an unreal world especially created for him by the popular press, the Hollywood movies, the big radio programs, the popular books (such as detective novels and sodden, sentimental, historical romances). Ignorance indeed has been lost in this stage of education which is yet the fate of so many that the customs and institutions of the western world have hardened around it.

A few, a very few, persons struggle on past their education and into a third stage which, for want of a better phrase, we may name "ignorance regained." Here a caution is necessary. Knowledge is power, and power is ethically neutral. The first use of a newly acquired power is its misuse. The airplane bombed in war before it carried passengers in peace, high-speed printing produces the yellow press, and soap operas are the chief ornaments of the radio. But these abuses are not inherent in the media. We cannot blame the power, only the errors which have led to its misuse. The way out, then, is not down to the primitive. We should not fall back on candlelight when the electric power fails but rather perfect the

electrical system so that it will not break down. The road to the romantic past is closed; we must look forward to the true cultivation and the proper functioning of the new instruments for mass education which we in the western world have acquired. Hence, ignorance regained is not a phrase to describe a fashionable sort of primitivism. It absorbs rather than denies the techniques we have acquired.

Ignorance regained consists in the attitude of inquiry which has at its command the instruments of controlled imagination and developed logic against the background of a greater experience with fact, reluctant to accept any knowledge as final except the tools of reason and the passion for the search. Some of those who acquire this faculty are to be found among the personnel of the arts, the sciences, and philosophy. The task of the theory of education, then, is how to disclose the formal principles of theory and the interpretations of procedure which will produce these results in more students. Put otherwise, how are we to substitute aids for obstacles, the questions for the answers, the methods of research for the absolute truth?

At first glance, we appear to be cautioning skepticism; but such is not the case. It is the ignorant and the stupid and the slow whose minds are storehouses of beliefs. The intelligent know how to think and to judge; hence, a belief has a harder time getting into their minds. The process of education requires as much effort and time to unlearn the wrong beliefs as it does to indoctrinate the right ones. It is the certainty of beliefs which must be placed under attack, for the fear of false knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. Skepticism is a stage in the process of unlearning, not an end in the pursuit of knowledge. We should not accept dogma—this is what we have been saying; but we cannot remain skeptics. Socrates did not teach skepticism; he taught the limits of ignorance and assumed the existence of a true knowledge which he hoped to find, and at least intended to seek on very nearly religious grounds. The alternative to these errors in procedure is to acknowledge that the search for truth is asymptotic. The pursuit of knowledge is always a matter of approach, for we can believe that there is such a thing as the truth without thinking that we have it or even that we are very close to finding it. We are obliged, then, to employ the techniques of the asymptote, and we shall be surprised to find that they are somewhat

complicated. Before we can proceed with such techniques, however, we shall have to study the nature of belief as important to the theory of unlearning.

### *Theory of Belief*

The mind is a more complex affair than was once supposed. Indeed, so difficult is the whole business that it is no longer fashionable to refer to it as an entity but only to point to the integration of its parts in a process. Awareness is the traditional name for this entity, though behavior is the more recent one; while the unconscious is presently represented only by its malfunctioning. Other departments pertinent to our purpose must be introduced: There is memory, for instance, whose current surrogates are recall, recognition, and re-learning. We shall have need here to direct attention mainly to a more recent philosophical and anthropological theory dealing with the positive content of the unconscious. Behavior in terms of responses to the stimuli set up by propositions and by combinations of propositions has yet to be sufficiently explored. It so happens that human cultures, being more or less consistent structures, exhibit in their details the implicit deductions from hidden axioms. The cultures are permeated through and through with the influence of the axioms, so that to live in the culture, to grow up in it, is to absorb the axioms without ever once becoming aware of them. The deeper the level of the unconscious, the more primitive the logical level of the structural proposition represented by belief, so that as we endeavor to think through to the elements of the unconscious, we penetrate past deductions, reach lower than theorems, and finally get down to the layer of the axioms themselves. In the sense that these are common to all individual members of a culture, they are social. Erroneous deductions may be private and individual, but the axiom-set is public.

It is also ontological, and by "ontological" here is meant concerned with basic value systems. We shall use the term "ontology" as the positive and constructive answers to metaphysical problems. Here, then, at the level of unconsciously held beliefs resides that profoundest of beliefs, the belief in what is real. By "real" here we shall mean the immediate object of the true. No human can live among his fellows for any length of time and share their interests and activities without holding in common with them some beliefs

about the ultimate nature of things. These beliefs may be implicit rather than explicit, but they dominate most surely every one of our thoughts and actions; and the less we are aware of them, the more they are effective. They are the axioms dictating action. The culturally prevalent, implicit, dominant ontology is the greatest force in the life of every individual.

Most people do not do any more abstract thinking than is absolutely necessary for their simple needs; but each of us feels, if not all equally profoundly, and everyone engages in action. Unconscious beliefs are contained as consequences more clearly in feelings and actions than they are in the expression of conscious thoughts. So it is at the level of feeling and action that we readily find the phenomenon of the implicit, dominant ontology. A man may assert one belief and, under the pressure of crisis, act in the spirit of another. When we act from feeling, we act from the springs of unconscious belief. Our beliefs, so to speak, betray themselves in feelings and in actions, but they never appear candidly as what they are, and their axiomatic nature is well concealed.

The acquisition of the axioms takes place early in life. It is not absorbed at any one moment nor by any single process. We accept beliefs from our way of life, from our parents, friends, and teachers, from all contacts with other persons, and also with the folkways and artifacts of the culture of which we are to be a part. The formalization of the process of axiom-acquisition is a topic to be undertaken somewhat later in the discussion. Here we shall be concerned only with the situation as it confronts the educator. By the time formal education begins at any advanced stage, it is already late. Who can yet determine how soon we adopt those beliefs of which we are so unconscious that we question the sanity of any who may wish to examine them? Yet, all further education is in terms of those beliefs and must reckon with them.

We have praised reason only at the conscious level and feelings only at the unconscious. And this has led us to note that principles are held at the unconscious level as well, so that the reasons which underlie the conscious feelings must also be reckoned with; but there is more to the problem than that. The trouble with education in this connection may have been that it has operated in terms of an imperfect analysis of reason. It may have allowed peo-

ple to be taught how to draw conclusions from axioms but not how to question axioms. Now here is an effective field of inquiry. It happens that this sort of education for reasoning may have bad effects as well as good ones. When Hitler came into power the German nation was one of the most highly educated in the world. Thus, the Germans were able to follow the logic of Naziism, once they accepted its axioms, with all the deadly deducibility that education for reasoning could bestow. The questioning of axioms is not a simple affair of reasoning; it involves some knowledge of ontology as well as of logic.

The proper kind of education, then, must consist in the eliciting of contradictions in the matter of unconsciously held beliefs, to demonstrate elements of untenability in the implicit, dominant ontology. Only when this has been done have we prepared a student for the ready reception of material furnished by the agreement between logic and fact. For to convince him that he holds contradictions is to render his present beliefs untenable and thus to put him in the way of examining others along with them.

Here, of course, we have reached the boundaries of philosophy. The professional philosophers have their own difficulties. To make the implicit explicit, to choose between alternative ontologies (including the consideration of anti-ontological positions), to seek to discover what they themselves believe (in contrast to what at first they may think they believe), and, finally, to seek to discover the truth about such matters is to be confronted with a set of almost hopeless tasks. Yet this is where education begins, not where it ends. We do not have to be in possession of more than a small part of the truth in order to know something of the method by which it might be pursued. The techniques of the asymptote are the limits of the ontological field, suggested by empirical data and defined by logical structure. Such knowledge can never be more than probabilistic, and our approach to it, tentative, exploratory, and inquisitive; and the more profound the level at which our investigations are made, the more this holds true.

### *Theory of Learning*

The theory of education ought to have two broad divisions. The first of these might be a deduction from the theory of knowledge

(epistemology). The educational process would follow theoretically from the tentatively accepted principles as to how we can know. Learning, considered in this connection, is the disciplined method of control whereby we utilize the knowledge process. The second is a deduction from the theory of reality (ontology). The educational process would follow theoretically also from the tentatively accepted body of knowledge as to what there is to be known. Learning, considered in this connection, is the disciplined method of control whereby we utilize the process of inquiry into being. In this section we must try to sketch a theory of knowledge and to give some implications to education; in the next section, to perform the same service for the theory of reality. But before we can consider the formal type of learning which this advanced stage represents, we shall be obliged to consider some earlier, yet very important, preliminary stages. Learning will be considered under three broad subdivisions: (*a*) preformal learning, (*b*) informal learning, and finally (*c*) formal learning.

#### PREFORMAL LEARNING

Preformal learning is ontogenetic. We are dealing with the development of the individual as a matter of capacity. Maturation is the first indication that there are definite stages in such development. Apart from theories of inherent knowledge, such as *anamnesis*, the capacity for the holding of knowledge is a definite preparation for its acquisition. A mind, before knowledge, is a definite capacity, a possibility of sheer awareness. Here, no doubt, heredity plays a role; from the remote recapitulation of phylogenetic patterns to the nearer immediate antecedents from grandparents down, certain excellences of physiological equipment are handed on which are at present largely a matter of guesswork. What is it that makes one child brighter than another? Better coupling of the neurons, smoother pathways across synapses, faster connections within the hypothalamus? This will be a matter for physiology someday to decide. But that differences do exist in the degree of ability to acquire knowledge and to manipulate it once acquired, there can be little doubt, even though these differences are difficult to measure and, indeed, cannot be accurately measured by means of any existing techniques.

The mind, we shall venture at this point, is a certain capacity to acquire knowledge, to hold it, and to use it. It must be that, in addition to maturation and other ontogenetic and phylogenetic factors, there are also the accidents of chance encounters with the environment. The brain of the infant develops from birth, but he also lives in the world and has interactions with it. Thus, there arise individual peculiarities and differences quite apart from those originally present. These differences, together with the total inheritance, produce a perspective. No two individual perspectives are alike, though all largely overlap.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to say when the perspectives become influenced by belief. Most certainly, beliefs do begin at the earliest moments. Perspectives are formed by the awareness that, for the subject, there are objects among the data of experience. We have, then, separate occasions for the development of perspectives which are phenomenological, and beliefs which are ontological. The ontological categories do not, as Kant insisted, prevent us from experiencing the real world; but, like binoculars, by intensifying our vision, they also narrow it and determine what part of the real world we shall experience. Very soon we understand that what we believe in comes to us through a perspective. Thus, there arises the notion of an implicit, dominant ontology which delimits the capacity it helps to provide.

Sheer awareness has its own structure. It has also its own selected environment. Obviously, any actual thing—in this case any organism—is affected by the total environment. But it is aware from its perspective of a more limited area, which we shall call the available environment. To this area it devotes a certain alertness, a low-grade sensitivity which is invoked when attending to something the mildest of disturbances. Stimulus at this level is a matter of mere exposure; and response, one of elementary awareness. The structure of awareness is so primitive that the individual is, so to speak, helpless in the hands of the data and can only respond with surprise to the novelty inherent in every act of experience. The preformal development of the capacity for learning comes to this: The organism in its occupancy of a perspective, in virtue of its equipment, undertakes to be the more sensitive end-term in the relation with the environment and to store as images and generals the products of their interaction.



## INFORMAL LEARNING

We shall examine informal learning on the assumption that it is generally of three kinds, (a) ordinary living encounters, (b) encounters with inconsistency in knowledge held, and (c) problem-solving.

*Ordinary Living Encounters.* The most rudimentary kind of informal learning issues from feelings of attraction or repulsion for elements encountered in experience. Feelings of pleasure or pain could be the primary sources. Feelings of pleasure lead to attraction in the service of the desire for repetition. These feelings eventually take the crude form of imitation, which is perhaps the earliest version of learning. Feelings of repulsion are initiated in the same way, namely as a matter of encounters with resistance in experience, as the lowest variety of pain. Contrary perceptions are one instance of this resistance, since difficulty of this sort is an obstacle. Plato thought that such, indeed, was the origin of all thought.

Imitation is more active than any response produced by resistance, but the beginnings of planned activity in learning come with trial-and-error. Here we are still in the province of informal learning, but we are approaching the borders. We now sample the environment with a view to discovering whether the feelings received will be pleasurable or painful, with the anticipation only that they will tend toward the one or the other. This kind of learning still survives, although less and less, in higher types of formal learning. There is no doubt a large, logical element in trial and error. We seek to find whether the portions of the environment we encounter will prove compatible or will conflict with our feelings. This is the element which the higher types of learning have sought to save.

*Encounters with Inconsistency in Knowledge Held.* We have a more rigorous variety of the use of logic in the inspection of knowledge already acquired. The judgment of the inadequacy of knowledge held requires some logical estimation. We perceive a shortcoming in what we believe we know as contrasted with what we continue to experience. Logic operates on mere experience, but not to the extent to which it does when we shift our attention altogether with an increase in knowledge. Here contradiction is the only kind of resistance which it is possible to encounter. Such an event constitutes a way of learning, for it tells us that what we

know is badly known or that, to some extent, it consists in false knowledge. For the first time we are leaning on purely logical elements in the learning process. Hitherto, logic had been an adjunctive component of sensory elements encountered in experience. The experience of inconsistency, while requiring more acute perceptions, is still an experience. Only now our sensations tell us of more than sensory elements; these can in fact be discriminated only with the aid of the perception of relations. Logical relations are part of the product of sense experience. We get the tools along with the raw materials and then work over the one with the other.

*Problem-solving.* Problem-solving must still be classified as informal learning so long as we do not employ established techniques. Let us say that in the course of our experience we have encountered obstacles; these are either of an empirical nature, such as are found among the elements of the external world, or of a logical nature, and located among the relations of our knowledge. Further, we recognize in these obstacles a generic property; we see that from time to time we shall encounter similar difficulties, or else we comprehend that the problem is of the kind that will allow us time for its solving. Thus, we are formalized in our learning procedure to a much greater extent than formerly. Problem-solving can become established as a practice, and it can lead to discovery. In problem-solving, reason begins to assume a dominance over feeling, and we are led on toward more disciplined techniques. We have, in fact, reached the borders of formal learning.

#### FORMAL LEARNING

There are in problem-solving some notions of generality, as contained, for instance, in what we might call an anticipation of similarity in respect to further problems yet to arise. In this anticipation there are feelings of inadequacy—the awareness of ignorance, for instance, carrying with it the necessity for training. We know that we need to acquire the equipment in terms of which future problems can be properly and perhaps successfully met. The fear of failure may often lead to the awareness of ignorance, and this is where formal learning begins.

The training, of which we have spoken, is in two parts, (a) the

theoretical and (*b*) the practical. The theoretical training consists in learning systems of ideas and values; the practical, in deriving inferences from performance. The first category should be turned over to theorists who have worked out the techniques of communication. The second is a matter of getting hold of the principles of conditioning, after the methods followed by Pavlov and the later behaviorists.

*Theoretical Training.* Theoretical learning is dependent upon systems of communication. This in turn will here be subdivided into (1) communication proper, involving the learning of systems of ideas, and (2) persuasion, involving the apprehension of values.

(1) Communication is conducted in terms of languages. Languages are systems of ideas expressed as sets of signs or symbols. Any system of knowledge is also a system of communication: There would be no point in the abstract organization of our knowledge of theoretical physics were there no hope of communicating it. We may, then, consider all knowledge systems as communication systems in at least one of their aspects, although this function may be indirect as well as direct. Here we are concerned with language systems which operate in terms of direct communication. Direct communication takes place by means of denotative signs: signs that directly refer to logical meanings.

There are three, and only three, kinds of signs, and as a consequence three kinds of language according to the predominant sign in use in each of them. There are axial languages, logical languages, and actual-object languages, depending upon whether value-signs, logical signs (i.e., universals or generals), or actual-object signs (i.e., particulars or individuals) prevail. There is no such thing in practice as a pure language, that is, one involving only one kind of sign, yet there are languages containing marked amounts of one element clearly dominant over the others. Most of the great world languages are combinations of all three kinds of pure language. We must remember that, although language is the greatest of cultural tools and, therefore, systematic to some extent, still it is not entirely a planned affair. We can separate out the elements.

Axial languages were devised to communicate values. The language of art is an example of an axial language. Axial languages are employed in indirect communication. There is no such thing

as a direct communication of the values. Analogy is one of the more popular tools of the axial language. It seems easier for critics to talk about one art in the terms of another, when they wish to transfer feelings. Theology is another province where axial languages are employed.

Logical languages were devised to communicate abstract structures, laws, all denotative material. The language of mathematics is the prototype of all logical languages. It works by analysis, by division, and with reference to fixed principles. The bare bones of the technique of communication show through here so plainly that the deductive method itself becomes part of the communication. In logic, we communicate the system of communication as well as the subject matter communicated.

Actual-object languages were devised to communicate matters of fact. They cannot escape the use of universal signs nor the connotations dragged along by images, but their main concern is with actual situations. They work chiefly by definite description. Journalistic language and descriptive history are good examples of the use of actual-object languages.

It should perhaps be emphasized that the analysis of the elements of the three languages is difficult, because sometimes a word represents one language in one context and another in another. Consider the word "red" in three sentences. "The river ran red with blood," "Red lies near one end of the spectrum," and "The color of this tie I am wearing is red." The first red is an axial term, the second a logical term, and the third an actual-object term. The determination of what language is being employed depends upon the references involved and can sometimes be made from context. More often than not, the situation is a mixed one, containing several types of elements.

It is important to note in the theory of education that not all formal communication is in terms of written or spoken sign languages. Gestures become standardized, too. Any movement may be meaningful and even be established as such. Hence, they may become part of formal communication. The material to be communicated and the means of communication interact; ideas determine language positively, and language determines ideas negatively. Communication is on its way to becoming an empirical science, due to

the work of Shannon, Wiener, and others. Eventually this could exercise an effect upon the theory of education.

(2) Persuasion is a kind of communication. Just as communication proper was concerned with formal languages, including the axial language, so persuasion is concerned with indirect communication by means of values. It hopes to play upon the emotions to achieve the feeling of conviction. Communication proper works with the axial language, but in direct terms. Indirect communication or persuasion works with all languages as though they were axial languages. For it seeks to communicate the apprehension of values, which is always a matter of connotation rather than of denotation.

Here we must revert to our theory of belief, to the process of awareness. Education-wise, the important part of belief was asserted to be unconscious. We shall now be dealing with opinion, which is deliberately held belief. We are unaware of most of our beliefs, but those of which we are aware are the objects of scrutiny. We can be conscious of only one belief at a time, and this is because we wish to examine it. A belief in the presence of awareness, then, is named opinion; for it is scheduled to be more firmly accepted or else to be rejected. Hence, the stage of opinion is for a proposition a temporary one.

For the purposes of persuasion, then, a language is required. Underlying any language is an implicit ontology. It is to be found imbedded in the syntax, even if nowhere else, and so takes effect indirectly. Thus, the process of persuasion lurks in the implicit assumption carried by the didactic languages which are employed in direct communication. To enunciate any statement of sufficient importance is to convey presuppositions unwittingly; in this way we often say more than we wish to say, more, for that matter, than we know. Thus, in employing languages emotively, we are almost certain to go beyond the immediate question at hand.

To say that persuasion communicates values and so obtains its effects by indirection is not to say that it is irrational, however. We would do well to distinguish the reasons which conflict with certain of the feelings from those which are in accord with them. There is no inherent opposition between values and logic; the achievement of harmony is more a matter of arrangement. Any change of opinion finally requires reasons; it can never be brought

about arbitrarily. Belief and doubt stand equally in need of arguments which at least appear to be cogent. Now it is true that, in the act of persuasion, reasons are often disguised or submerged; they may be heavily cloaked with emotion or presented in some other wrapping. No persons exist so stupid or dull as not to require reasons for changing their opinions.

Persuasion aims to communicate a change of views. This means introducing a doubt as to the truth of the proposition held which it is proposed to alter. We are all a mass of prejudices. Everyone has an opinion on every topic of which he takes cognizance; and if we admit the existence of unconscious belief, then he has opinions, too, on many topics of which he does not take cognizance. We would never deliberately change an opinion did we not acquire some misgivings as to the position we already held. Now this is never done gladly and on a purely logical basis; a change always involves some doubt together with its feelings of discomfort, often amounting to pain. Thus, persuasion involves a negative factor. Self-persuasion includes the cultivation of doubt in one's self. We must learn to doubt what we hold to be valid and true, if only in order to test its validity and truth.

Completed acts of persuasion never have been brought about by gradual stages but always take place by jumps. Looking back, we see that we have been influenced often by means of a number of small, imperceptible steps; but the actual change in opinion was a sudden affair of which perhaps we had been unaware. There is no middle ground between believing in one thing and coming to accept its contradictory, and so the shift from one to the other cannot take place by degrees. The process is no less decisive for being unobtrusive and unobserved. Reason operates with a silent method yet one which is none the less sure.

*Practical Training.* Formal learning as it stems from the practical business of deriving inferences from performance is an unsteady affair which presents obstacles when we attempt to reduce it to a set of principles. Conditioning experiments introduce controls into the matter of experience, and this does tell us something about how the mechanism of stimulus and response operates. But in the matter of relating experience to education, particularly with respect to formal learning, such efforts do not go far enough. The

reason is that in the process of education we are dealing, not merely with controlled acts of experience, but with the whole human being. The lessons of experience must be different for an illiterate and for an intellectual. The same stimulus would not meet with the same response since the capabilities of receiving stimuli are not equal in all cases. Moreover, within each group, the lessons differ from individual to individual. What Hegel made out of his experience is quite distinct from what Kant did.

The analysis of experience in these terms reveals not one philosophy, as the philosophers of experience maintain, but many. There must be as many philosophies of experience as there are philosophers having experiences, and this includes even those who deny the cogency of experience in philosophy. Therefore, we are forced back into a more primitive analysis, we cannot talk about the lessons of experience until we have examined the structure of experience. Experience has a structure and a content. The content comes through experience but has little otherwise to do with it. In the analysis of experience, then, we discover, not what it contains, but what it is. Experience is an act, and it involves presuppositions, data, and a perspective. It is in the act that the transfer of content occurs. If by a supposed analysis we remove these, we would find ourselves left with the parts of the mechanism. It would soon be discovered, then, that the presuppositions are not logically derived from experience, since it is in terms of them that experience can take place. It would be discovered also that the data do not depend upon the experience through which their existence is first revealed. And, finally, it would be discovered that the perspective taken up was arbitrary. In this way, the analysis of experience would lead to philosophical implications which in the end have no more than an accidental connection with experience. Thus, we find that it is not experience which is our starting point but the formal structure of inquiry, a more active and at the same time a more logical affair. The principles of scientific method are being studied now under the general heading of the technique of discovery, and this should open up some very important areas to inquiry.

*Theory of the Known*

Education might be defined as the formal communication of the known. It is always a tentative affair, due to the limitations of both the methods of acquisition and the knowledge acquired. Neither process nor content should ever be regarded as more than interim affairs, for knowledge is hypothetical and only the inquiry itself is stable. Yet a theory of the known is involved, as is some organization of knowledge. This is not the place in which to undertake a survey of the whole of knowledge, though some such survey is a necessary part of every philosophy of education. It is obviously the task of the philosopher of education to get into communicable form the material which he wishes to pass on. Now since all learning takes place in terms of universals and in some order or system, it is by communicating the structure of knowledge that we render much more accessible the transfer of its details. We want to know the limits of what there is to be known, and we cannot become acquainted with the limits without some familiarity with the structure of knowledge—the form, so to speak, in which it is to be passed on.

The last structure of the whole of knowledge was the one erected by Aristotle. With certain adjustments and revisions, we employ his ideas in our practice today. The Greeks did not have experimental science, not, at least, in the modern sense of controlled experiments at deep levels of analysis, where instruments become necessary and final mathematical formulations are made of empirical findings. But such activities have been squeezed into the Aristotelian synthesis—not, of course, without some difficulty. The modern departments of a university are no longer viable. They were set up along Aristotelian lines, but, in terms of the rapid advances of modern knowledge, they have become unserviceable. Recategorization is seriously required. New crosslines of research, fresh fields of inquiry, indicate sorely needed realignments.

Several examples taken from actual practice will make this clear. Recent work in the foundations of mathematics has shown that mathematics is an extension of logic. Logic is a branch of philosophy, so that those departments require reordering. Mathe-



matics has outgrown its origins, yet the relationship ought to be recognized and kept in the foreground. Proximity would serve this purpose well.

Again, history, philosophy, and other social studies have been pursued in a very disorganized fashion. It is becoming increasingly obvious that the parent study is social anthropology, the theory of human cultures. It has its structural subdivision in philosophy, particularly in ontology and ethics, and its developmental subdivision in history. The special social studies, such as economics and politics, must be ranged in their places, with economics as the most fundamental.

The entire business of knowledge is part of the philosophy of culture. There is no body of world knowledge which everyone is trying more or less successfully to learn. Knowledge for all cultures is not fixed or static, and the whole enterprise must be kept more or less permanently subject to revision. The implicit, dominant ontology governs what shall be worth knowing. It governs, also, how that knowledge shall be employed in practice. Since cultures are in a sense ontologies which have been applied within the limits of the given environment, the role of knowledge in a culture is a function of the orientation of that culture. Thus, knowledge differs from culture to culture and from time to time within a culture. The unconscious belief in what is real, which anchors the ontology in the culture, does not remain the same but changes very slowly. It is these very elusive influences which are the more powerful for being unacknowledged, these implicit consistencies which are the more pervasive for seeming to have no fixed center, which must be the most carefully analyzed and represented in fixed principles.

We might pause to regard one important recent shift in this area, where the belief in reality is beyond the conscious control of all of us. This is in the implicit, dominant ontology, the basic value system, of the western culture, particularly as it is reflected in the United States. Here the departure from the system of ideas established in the name of Aristotle has already been accomplished, though as yet its effects are not everywhere felt. The main shift has been one from substance to function. It can be seen in physics, for instance, in the transformation of matter into energy; it can

be seen in logic in the replacement of the old subject-predicate logic by a relational logic; in legal theory by the conception of property as dynamic function substituting for that of property as static substance; and in politics by the shift from a negative democracy to a positive democracy, in which the government which operates effectively is not only the least possible but also the most necessary.

It is evident that a new synthesis is emerging, a new structure of the whole of knowledge which will not leave any department unaffected. What is actually involved is a transfer of social belief and practice from the philosophy of nominalism to that of a modified Platonic realism, underground perturbations certain to cause convulsive movements in the whole of the culture. To explore its various ramifications, therefore, requires the utmost in sensitivity and in breadth of investigative techniques. Knowledge is a by-product of the search for truth; and systems of knowledge are thrown up—and left behind—by every new and concerted cultural effort of inquiry. It is one task of the philosophy of education to call the turn on every large-scale movement in the fundamental theory of knowledge in a given culture.

There are four, and at the present time only four, grand routes of inquiry. These are: art, religion, philosophy, and science. To these must be added, in a secondary manner, practical techniques. All but one of these are so old that we know nothing of their beginnings. The arts and religion are very ancient, and very possibly philosophy is, too. The last of the four, science, at least in the sense we now intend by the term, which is experimental science, is no older than the seventeenth century. There may well be others of which we, as yet, are unaware. In historical development, now one and now another of these fields sparks the remainder. Education must reckon with all four, but only to the extent to which they possess positive communicable knowledge and viable methods of inquiry.

Nothing ought to be taught publicly and formally except in areas where there is agreement among rational investigators. This would require us to leave the teaching of the established, institutionalized religions to others and to concentrate on the problems of religion, including the whole spectrum of comparative religion

from dogmatism to atheism. Each of the others has its own educative value. The sciences teach experimental skills and instrumental techniques. The arts teach the intensification of the senses. Philosophy, including mathematics, teaches rational facility in coping with formal structures. The scientist is more dextrous in dealing with empirical material, the artist is more sensitive, while the philosopher and the mathematician move more easily at the level of high abstractions.

Each of these broad fields has, of course, its own principles and practices. Thus, education cannot afford to omit any, though such omissions have been and continue to be the custom. Socrates thought that the acquisition of moral perfection was the goal of education. In the *Larws* we are told that education is instruction in perfect virtue. Today we see education more in terms of the use of technical facilities. Both are important. Knowledge is virtue, Socrates asserted, and this can be maintained even after we have broadened knowledge to include manual skills which he would never have admitted.

### *Concrete Proposals*

The next step will be to suggest some applications which are relevant to the foregoing pages. These will be in terms of concrete problems in education, first as to methods, next as to program, and finally as to institutions.

#### METHODS

The methodology of teaching properly centers on the theory of the relation of theory to practice. This, it should be noted, is a theory and not a practice, even where the theory emphasizes practice over theory.

The oldest and best established tradition of education is the one which concentrates on the principles. The compulsory learning of what is believed in the way of principles is the form this tradition has taken. It has been perhaps longest the custom to teach abstract principles, on the assumption that, with a thorough grounding in their knowledge, students could easily work out for themselves how to apply them. The difficulties and limitations of this conception became evident with the increase in exact knowledge. For

application itself now requires a whole new set of principles which have to do with the techniques of practice. These *modus operandi* formulas relate the highly abstract principles to the concrete practices, both of which are powerless without them.

When the reaction occasioned by the new technical knowledge occurred, it went to the other extreme, as might have been expected. Principles were to be abandoned altogether, on the plea that they were not fixed or absolute, and practices were to be taught for their own sake. Progressive education is as old as Plato but looks unfamiliar in its modern dress. Some authorities in progressive education teach that we must learn by doing, or, as some wit put it, by the theory of doing, which is translated in the modern progressive schools into "learn by watching someone else do." The assumption is that the best way to learn theory is through practice and that then, having the practice, we will not need the theory. This is an Aristotelian type of confusion of theory with practice, of which, by the way, Aristotle himself would never have been guilty. If we are to learn by doing, that should be the end of formal education: We ought merely to go out and do. For there is nothing more to learn about learning by doing; there is only the doing.

What saves progressive education at this point is that the theory of the relation of theory to practice is not a practice after all but a theory. As such, of course, it may be practiced, and we can tell in advance that such practice must prove sterile. It issued, as a matter of fact, in the improvised curriculum. Presumably the theory would be all right for a society which planned to be static, which wanted to hang on but not to advance. If education is a reorganization of experience, then we might well ask, "Experience in terms of what?" The philosophy of experience obviously teaches in terms of things as they are. It does not teach about them as they ought to be or as they might be. So much the worse, then, for certainly things are not what they ought to be. If we cannot strive even on ideal grounds to make the next generation better than ourselves, then all is lost and there is no reason to hope.

The reaction to Dewey's anti-intellectual influence has been comparatively mild but potentially dangerous. It has consisted in traditionalism with a vengeance. We are to return to metā-

physics but not to speculative metaphysics; instead, we are offered an official and dogmatic metaphysics. Now if there is anything less stimulating to education than an anti-intellectual philosophy, it is an authoritative intellectual philosophy; for both are the enemies of reason. Curiously, both Dewey and the Thomists ban free speculation in metaphysics; the former by declaring metaphysics useless, the latter by making a single metaphysics official. No one seeks knowledge of the truth who thinks he has found it, and in the field of metaphysics the competing systems and theories have exploratory value to the extent to which they differ. No enterprise can hope to stay alive that does not keep its doors open. To pronounce one metaphysics imperative is as damaging to the open-mindedness which true education requires as to ostracize metaphysics altogether in terms of an unacknowledged and implicit metaphysics. Curiously, although the one emphasizes principles and the other practice, in neither case is there any progress in the knowledge of principles, and in both cases practice suffers.

#### PROGRAM

May there not be a third alternative to the traditional emphasis on principles and the modern proffered alternative of an emphasis on practice? For after all, what is practice if not the practice of some theory? The best type of education must teach theory as though it did not need applications (which in fact it does not, except for the sake of practice), but also it must teach practice as though it did need theory (which in fact it does). We ought to abandon the old devotion to principles alone and the new devotion to practice alone and substitute the technical practice of abstract theory. It should be made clear that we are dealing with three types of items: principles, practices, and the relations between them. These distinctions can be maintained effectively only if we teach principles and practices separately, for only things which are properly distinguished can be properly related.

When we come to apply our new doctrine to education, we find that we must begin with the problem as it faces us. Children are knowledgeable early. In terms of what their information consists, it can be said, not that they do not know, but that they know too much. At this point we ought to apply the procedure

which would follow from the theory of unlearning. Children are ethically neutral until taught otherwise. Here we should have to introduce the range of the field together with some classic proposals in it. We have learned from progressive education that the young must have whatever freedom and pleasures they can be given consonant with the establishment of good habit-patterns. The behaviorists have not sufficiently generalized Pavlov's work. Establishing habit-patterns with respect to principles as well as practices is more important for students than allowing them to express themselves. Only, in contrast to what has been the most recent custom, there ought to be available an objective orientation.

It will not be enough to weave the warp of principles with the woof of practice unless we can also show that there is a whole cloth emerging. We want students to know without the aid of some dogmatism, such as an official philosophy or theology, that there is a consistency of such truths and applications as they already accept. Here there lurk dangers, unless the conception of an open system is carried along. Plato was right when he said that the end of education is insight into the harmony of the cosmos. But we must remember that, as knowledge increases, all schemes of harmony are apt to reveal their deficiencies; we think we know the whole until we learn more about the parts and learn, too, about more parts. Hence, along with the notion of integration must come that of toleration.

In the humble sense, a teacher ought finally to be one who imparts tentative knowledge and especially acts as a leader in inquiry, a more or less blind, yet intuitive, guide to the discovery of the truth. He must believe that there are truths to be known and that events, however unfavorable, cannot affect the order of their importance. The arch example is that of Comenius, the seventeenth-century Moravian textbook writer and educator, who was exiled innumerable times from various places of refuge and had the trial of watching his home burned three times in as many countries. He taught that culture was general in Europe, that truth was independent of nationality, and that humanity was universal in its good qualities. Those who exhibit the same fortitude as his but do so in terms of some set of national or institutional truths hold their mission otherwise. They have not yet learned Comenius' lesson.

## INSTITUTIONS

The function of the university is the communication and the advancement of inquiry into culture. Methods of teaching have their chosen content and their institutional expression. When institutions are the means by which we pass on the knowledge of the whole, we get procedures which tend to be oppressive. This can be equally damaging when it is fragmented; what undergraduate today understands anything about the connection between his various studies? The problem is how to institutionalize education conceived as the by-product of the search for truth without doing harm to the existing knowledge of principles.

There has developed gradually through recent decades an unsatisfactory type of education in our institutions of higher learning. Apart from the special empirical sciences (which stress practice over theory), most teaching is a matter of pat formulas and takes place in a limbo which lies inconveniently between theory and practice. Highly abstract speculations are neglected, along with highly concrete data, for a set of maxims and short cuts to procedures, a mixture which contains no wisdom and no genuine experiences. These practical maxims are not to be confused with the *modus operandi* principles which were mentioned in the last section. They could be better labeled as conformist devices for avoiding experiences. They are techniques for escaping from the novelty and the variety and the freshness which are life itself.

To counter these baffling influences, and in terms of the new synthesis, we might state and illustrate the aims of education as follows:

The aims of education are threefold. These are to build right thought, right feeling, and right action.

First, as to right thought: The direction of learning seems to be toward increasing objectification. First, the child thinks only of himself, then of the object in relation to himself, and finally of the object in relation to other objects. Formal education ought to follow closely and take advantage of this feature of maturation. Thus far, as we have seen, the unconscious is represented only by its malfunctioning, and objectivity is merely mental hygiene. But here is the place for the formalization of the process of axiom-acquisition, a task of gigantic proportions.

Second, as to right feeling: In elementary education, this is learning what to dislike. Pleasure is a matter of faring well and of being happy, but these must come from pursuing the best and achieving the good. Speculative morality is the standard here, leading to the same unconscious axiomatic belief with which right thought is concerned, because the holding of knowledge is a matter of feeling and, therefore, the holding of right knowledge is the basis of right feeling. We must acquire, then, the proper quality standards and a prejudice in favor of the excellent. We shall not understand how to possess knowledge until we have learned to live with a faith in its limitations.

Third, as to right action: Learning to live with faith in the limitations of knowledge is carried out in practice by the techniques of the asymptote. The development from the point of maturation ought to be met with habit-patterns to form character, which is the strength to pursue aims. We are accustomed to witnessing this only in the army and the church, not in the arts and the sciences where it might equally well exist. Discipline teaches character if it is provided with reasons and does not exist merely for its own sake. Herbart was correct in supposing that discipline should be introduced into education from the beginning and that the child not be left free to find his own path of development, as Rousseau had advocated.

Formal education ought to start, then, with the fundamental tools of communication and soon advance to the theoretical knowledge of some branch of philosophy and of mathematics, the working knowledge of one fine art, and the empirical knowledge of one laboratory science. In addition, and with a view to the larger integration, a year spent in another culture, in order to gain some perspective, ought to be an indispensable part of everyone's preparation. It is the only possible coign of vantage from which to understand the culture in which we live. The foreign culture selected for this purpose ought to be as diverse as possible from one's own.

The university could well be divided according to the triad of aims of education. Instead of the present departments in the liberal-arts college, we would have: (1) a division of philosophy and mathematics, (2) a division of the fine arts (including literature),



and (3) a division of the empirical sciences, the latter subdivided into (a) formal (pure) sciences and (b) applied (practical) techniques.

*A Division of Philosophy and Mathematics.* It would be the business of the division of philosophy and mathematics primarily to teach ease and familiarity of movement among formal structures. This would mean to acquire the memory of a set of abstractions and then to get to know them; for it is only after knowing some such set that it becomes possible to learn about it. There are definite degrees in the acquisition of knowledge, and learning is only the first of them. Knowing something well means knowing it a long time, as Joubert pointed out; and Santayana indicates the penumbral areas with which we can become familiar, starting from a grasp of the core area. A knowledge of the history of philosophy and familiarity with logical principles and the manipulation of mathematical systems would be taught primarily from this point of view.

*A Division of the Fine Arts.* It would be the primary task of the division of the arts to educate the senses. It is possible to acquire an increased intensity of sense experience through the cultivation of a deliberate naïveté of perception. Through the practice of painting, for instance, the student can actually learn to see things as they are and not as he conceived them to be; he can learn to see through eyes as free as possible of preconceptions. Thus, painting requires unlearning before learning, as all other learning processes do. The arts would be available to any student, and one art would be required of each. He would have to know something of the theory of the fine arts and have a working, studio experience of at least one of them. It is not sufficiently known that the fine arts are supreme extensions of crafts and that some technical education in the craft is a necessary prerequisite to the practice of the art. Painters must know something about pigments as well as perspectives; composers must be familiar with the range and tonal quality of the instruments for which they propose to write, as well as the principles of harmony and counterpoint. Technique and knowledge of the craft is the necessary but of course not the sufficient cause for the production of an artist. It is the communicable part.

*A Division of Empirical Sciences: Formal.* It would be the task of the empirical sciences to teach the depths of structure inherent in the empirical world. The student would have to know something of the principles of scientific method and have a working laboratory experience with at least one of them. In addition to a firsthand knowledge acquired in the field or laboratory, a student in the division of the sciences ought to know something of the relation between the sciences, on the one hand, and the logic and presuppositions of the method, on the other. He ought to be familiar, in other words, with the area surrounding his science as well as with the details within it.

The department of applied mathematics would be located here. These would be matters of pure knowledge, not of practical experience.

*A Division of Empirical Sciences: Applied Techniques.* The subdivision of the practical techniques would teach the application of the pure sciences, a field which has its own abstract formulas. Education ought to prepare a man to meet his civilized problems as well as the uneducated man meets his relatively simpler problems; the needs are brought into play along with the formulas for satisfying them. It would also teach communication of skills, the practical techniques which have not yet been elevated into the position of a science or of an art, such as cooking, clothing, etc.

Finally, before leaving the student up in the air, there would be a finishing course in the learning which lies at the level of enlightened common sense but which for the present has no other home. It is not now taught as a matter of principles but is either handed on by word of mouth or learned as a matter of what is sometimes bitter experience. The subject matter here would be devoted to actually existing conditions. Some of these change from time to time while others do not. As an example of the former, there is the fact that most corporation lawyers spend a great deal of their time helping their clients legitimately to reduce their tax burden. As an example of the latter, there is the fact that most women are irritable during their menstrual period, and due allowance should be made for this emotional turmoil.

*What a University Ought To Be.* Hutchins deserves credit for having advertised in this country the fundamental question of what

a university ought to be. His answer and Adler's, of course, are wrong, but American education owes him this: Any other answer will have to be made at the high level of the question he has asked. Fortunately, the question had already been answered in Europe. A university ought to be a community of capable teachers who are trained enthusiasts, backed by productive scholars. Some of the best teachers and textbook writers are those who do not see all the implications; they are able to turn a limitation into an institutional advantage. The greatest of the productive scholars ought not to be made to teach any more than they care to. They ought to be left alone, and the efforts of a skeleton administrative staff concentrated on the welfare and discipline of the student body.



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